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Form and Its Meaning in the Creation of Art

Lê Ngọc Trà

The twentieth century has witnessed very important changes in the creation of art and the development of its self-awareness in critical theory and literary criticism. Trends in contemporary art—the most typical of which is fine art—often recurred with novel manifestos and discoveries. In the field of Aesthetics the transition from the Beautiful to the Aesthetic, the return to the Sublime, in the Kantian spirit, has supported and given wings to the searches for many new but bizarre forms. Nevertheless, there seems to be here an interruption in the development of creation starting with the artist and ending with the audience. There is a vast distance between the former's novel discoveries and the latter's appreciation ability. Public taste, which is by nature conservative, now seems unable to catch up with the artist's restless creativity. It appears that the audience is tied in a certain paradigm of art appreciation which is not really compatible with the real essence of artistic creation and therefore prevents a thorough perception of the uniqueness, particularity, and appeal of art as well as the artist's talent. One of such limitations stems from the public's understanding of form and its meaning, as well as the relation between form and content.

To date the most common mode of art appreciation is limited to the understanding of content. Content is more important than form. Because content determines form, form changes when content changes. This simplistic understanding of the relation between content and form not only prevents an adequate comprehension of the complex relationship between content and form but also lowers the meaning of the artistic form, consequently causing a misconception of the nature of art in general. In fact, in art the relation between content and form is much more complicated, and art itself as well as its meaning is never simple. To understand this, an aesthetic sensitivity is not enough. It must accompany a broader view involving philosophy, based on the assumption that art is inseparable from life and from man's total development.

It is often said that in art form and content are intertwined and that content can transform into form, determine form, and "form is couched in content." This concept of art is deep rooted in a philosophical and aesthetic tradition, particularly in Hegel's thought.

It was Hegel who first examined the pair Content and Form in a methodical manner. He writes: "[T]he content is not formless, but has *the form in its own self*, quite as much as *the form is external to it*. There is thus a doubling of form. At one time it is reflected into itself; and then is identical with the content. At another time it is not reflected into itself, and then it is external existence, which does not at all affect the content" (*Encyclopedia* 288-89; emphasis added). According to Hegel, form can be content when, as pointed out above, it is "reflected into itself," which is ''the Law of the Phenomenon.'' Even when it is not reflected into itself, when it is indifferent to content, "it is content itself except that it is a matterless, direct, and indifferent to the real one" (Bùi Văn Nam Sõn 532) . That is the nature of form and content, hence "content is nothing but the revulsion of form into content, and form nothing but the revulsion of content into form" (*Encyclopedia* 289). Hegel calls this revulsion an "absolute correlation," "one of the most important laws of thought."

Hegel develops at length this notion of content and form in *Lectures on Aesthetics.* According to him, art, religion, and philosophy are the existent forms of the Idea in its various stages of development into perfection and ultimate essence. In art thought also has various types—"symbolic, classical, and romantic." In Hegel's parlance these are "general types" or "universal forms of art." These types of art when realized thanks to its various materials will be "a determinate form of art," such as architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. These forms are closely related to the Absolute Idea because they affirm the actual existence of artistic forms. Artistic form is no other than the expression of the Idea.

In his philosophical and aesthetic works Hegel develops his concept of form in the above meaning—that is, in the relation between form and content form is an absolute idea, not a factor in a work of art, nor a means through which content is expressed. "Every definite content determines a form suitable to it" (*Aesthetics* 16). Content not only determines forms, but it can be transferred to form. For Hegel, content and form are inextricably linked. "Content and artistic shape are fashioned in conformity with each other" (78). Because artistic defects can be derived from content, it is ideal if content and form conform with each other. The unity of form and content is a requirement for a work of art. "A work of art that wants the right form," Hegel asserts, "is no right or true work of art" (*Encyclopedia* 289).

According to Hegel, the relationship between form and content exists in two ways. First, it affirms as a historical fact the existence of content in its stages of development. When Hegel alls Art, Religion, and Philosophy different forms of the Idea when he refers to Symbolism, Classicism, and Romanticism as general forms of art, he means to use forms of art used in that sense. Second, form is the *outside*, the visible part of content. This outside, however, is *not* different to content; rather, it is "an intelligent reflection" which *has the same nature as content and therefore is content* (emphasis added).

Hegel also views form in a different way. To him, form is not a representation of content but a means through which content is expressed. "The sensuous in works of

art," he writes, "is exalted to the rank of a mere resemblance in comparison with the immediate existence of things in nature, and the work of art occupies the mean between what is immediately sensuous and ideal thought"(*Aesthetics* 43). This "thingness" in a work of art does exist because it is part of "the sensuous." "Though the sensuous must be present in a work of art," Hegel explains "it must only appear as surface and semblance of the sensuous."(43). He emphasizes the perfection of technique as a requirement for a work of art. By way of illustration, Hegel explains why Goethe and Schiller emphasized the importance of form. Though these "men of genius were the first to give our nation works of true poetry, it was only their mature manhood that presented us with creations profound, substantial, and the outcome of genuine inspiration, while no less *thoroughly perfect in form*" (33; emphasis added).

Though Hegel speaks of "the external elements of form and medium"(89), that is, form as seen in accordance with the meaning and representation of content, he does not explicitly point out the nature of this type of form as well as its relation to content. This is easy to understand because Hegel was a philosopher, not an art theorist. Because Hegel viewed art from a philosophical standpoint, it was not a coincidence that he called his lectures on aesthetics "Philosophy of Art" or "Philosophy of the Creation of Art."

It was the Russian Formalists who examined in depth this second meaning of form and issues related to form not as philosophers but purely as art critics. It is fair to say that Clive Bell was considered contemporaneous with—even a bit earlier than—the Russian Formalists. Just as the year 1914 was marked by the emergence of Russian Formalism with Viktor Shklosky's speech titled *Vokreshenie slova* (The Revival of the Word) at a café in Saint-Peterburg, earlier in the same year Bell had published in London *Art*, a book that was to stir heated debates for a long time afterward.

In *Art*, Bell raises the question of what makes a work of art aesthetic. After observing various phenomena of art, especially sculpture, Bell comes to this conclusion: "[Only] one answer seems possible—significant form" (328-29). "When I speak of significant form," Bell explains, "I mean a combination of lines and colours (counting white and black as colours) that moves me aesthetically" (330). Further, he defines "significant form" as "arrangements and combinations that move us in a particular way" (332). According to Bell, "significant form," not general form, distinguishes a work of art from a non-art of work in that at least it must meet these two requirements: first, it consists of lines and colors and the combination of these lines and colours; second, it must be able to stimulate special emotions that Bell calls "aesthetic emotions." Aesthetic emotions differ from ordinary emotions in that they bring one into a different world where "the emotions of life find no place. It is a world with emotions of its own" (333). These emotions are created by the work's form, not by the scenes described in the work or the ideas stimulated by our reading of it. For this reason, Bell advises us "to appreciate a work of art we need to bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space" (333).

But why is significant form capable of bringing us aesthetic emotions? According to Bell, significant form "moves us so profoundly because it expresses the emotion of its creator"(338). It is co-called not because this kind of form carries a certain meaning and contains a certain content or ideas as one had thought, but because it has a value of its own, and is capable of provoking an aesthetic emotion exuding from a condensed emotional energy that is pouring out of the tip of his pen. That is the difference between significant form and beautiful form. The wings of a butterfly can be very beautiful, but they do not stimulate an emotion akin to what a work of art provokes in us. "It [the wing of a butterfly] is a beautiful form, but it is not significant form. It moves us, but it does not move us aesthetically" (338).

Bell's theory of form, especially his concept of significant form, has met diverse reactions, including strong criticisms. Noel Carroll (Monroe Beardsley), one of Bell's major critics, calls Bell's significant form "regrettably indeterminate." "[Bell] has given us no way to discriminate between significant form and insignificant form," Noel Carroll writes. What makes one juxtaposition of shapes significant, and another not? We have no way to decide. Thus, obscurity lies at the heart of formalism; the theory is useless, because its central term is undecided" (118).

Bell's discussion of significant form was an important hit that contributed to the shaping and developing of a movement in Formalism that was to bloom in both artistic creativity and literary criticism and theory of the twentieth century. Bell's theory of significant form can even be found in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin. As Michael Kelly rightly observes, until now Bell is still seen as "an early architect of contemporary analytic aesthetics. His formalist theory of art has become one of the classics of the twentieth century philosophical aesthetic" (251).

Bell's Russian contemporaries such as Shlosvsky, Boris Tomasshevsky, Yuri Tynyanov, Roman Jakobson, and Vladimir Propp formed an art movement known in the history of aesthetics and literary criticism and theory as Russian Formalism. The Russian Formalists did not explore philosophical aspects of formalism or the relation of form and content, but they concentrated chiefly on practical matters of form in a work of art, particularly language. If Bell's general ideas about form are based on fine art, the Russian Formalists' conclusions are derived from their examination of the language of the text. But the Russian Formalists' ambition is greater than Bell's. If Bell was interested in knowing the difference between works of art and non-art, the Russian Formalists wanted to create a *formalnyi metod* (formalist methodology), an autonomous science of literature which deals with the unique qualities of literary material. This would allow them to re-examine traditional methods of studying the history of literature: it is not the history of writers and their works, trends of social life and their impact on writers and their works; it is the development of form and "investigation must go from constructional function to literary function; from literary function to verbal function" (Richter 756).

In addition to studying the poetics of poetry and fiction, the role of "rhythm" and "phonic texture" in poetry, the distinction between *syuzhet* (plot) and *fabula* (narrative) in fiction, the Russian Formalists, like Bell, were concerned with the question of what makes a work become a work of art, or more accurately, what transforms words into poetry, and what can unify all types of art. Like Bell, the Russian Formalists found these not in the content but in the form of works of art, above all in their material and language. For Bell it is significant form, for Jakobson it is "literariness"; for Shklovsky it is *ostranenie* (defamiliarization). "Poetry," Jakobson writes, "is language in its aesthetic function. For this reason, the scientific object of literature is not literature, but its literariness, which makes a work literary" (*Rabotyi* 275). "When analyzing a literary work," he explains, "a linguist is concerned with its literariness, or the process of transforming words into poetry and its system of techniques through which this process is made possible" (81). In this process Jakobson is particularly interested in the notion of *poetic function.* Poetic function exists in all human linguistic activities, but it plays a key role in the language of poetry. According to him, it is important to study carefully the role of poetic function and literariness as a formalist characteristic of poetry because "poetic form clearly is a universal phenomenon of human culture" (80).

Just as for Jakobson literariness plays an important role in the poetic text, for Skhlovsky it is the use of ordinary language to make familiar things appear new and attractive. Skhlovsky explains this technique of "defamiliarization" as follows: Because the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not that important* (Richter 749; author's emphasis).

Though the Formalists are not concerned with the content of a literary work and the social and moral meaning of literature per se, their concentration on what attracts the reader to a literary work, on the meaning of art form, especially their in-depth study of techniques and language in poetry, was acknowledged by Bakhtin himself. "In the work of the Formalists," Bakhtin writes, "besides completely unfounded affirmations because they are too general, we come across many observations that have a scientific value. . . . The study of the technique of literary works in general has begun for the first time in the land of material aesthetics in Western Europe and Russia" *(Voprosyi* 13). Nevertheless, as pointed out by Bakhtin, the Formalists experienced very serious problems. Their "completely unfounded affirmations" were caused by their desire to transform what Bakhtin calls "formalist method " into general methodology, poetics into a sort of *spetsialnaia estetika* (specialized aesthetics) and *materialnaia estetika* (material aesthetics) into philosophical aesthetics. According to Bakhtin, the Formalists' material aesthetics is not related at all to Kant's or Herbart's aesthetics of form, nor is it similar to Hegel's or Schelling's aesthetics of content.

Designed to be an art theory but lacking a philosophical basis, the Formalists' material aesthetics only deals with a technical aspect of art creation. It does not explain the fundamental distinction between an aesthetic object and a work of art, between *arkhiektonitseskaia forma* (architectonical form) and *kompozitxionnaia forma* (compositional form). It also fails to explain why *estetitseskoe videnie* (aesthetic view) exists outside art. Bakhtin's most serious accusation against the Formalists is their contention that "the composition of a work of art is considered the main value of art and the aesthetic object itself" (18).

Bakhtin provides a detailed explanation of the concepts the Formalists have trouble dealing with. First, he calls an *aesthetic object* "the content of aesthetic activity (observation) directed at an art work." Its content reflects an artistic view, a perception of life whereas a work of art does not. The content of an aesthetic object has a form of its own which Bakhtin calls *architectonical form.* Determined by its architectonical form, an aesthetic object is therefore not something abstract or undecipherable, but becomes an artistic work when its content is rendered concrete. Bakhtin defines *compositional form* as material organized into a work of art. Compositional forms, therefore, possess a teleological goal, "serve" a certain purpose, and are often evaluated under *a technical angle* (emphasis added). By contrast, architectonical forms do not "serve" anything. They are the forms that exist in their aesthetic uniqueness, "the forms of spiritual and physical values invented by aesthetic man, the form of nature as man's living environment, the forms of events in their personal, social, and historical aspects" (20). Architectonical forms stipulate the selection of compositional forms. For example, *tragedy*, which is an architectonical form, selects for itself *drama*, a compositional form. Similarly, *lyric* as an architectonical has *lyrical poems* as compositional forms. According to this classification, *satire*, *heroic idealization*, *type, character* are pure architectonical forms. *Chapters*, *stanzas*, *lines* are units that are pure compositional forms. *Rhythm*, in particular, may belong to this or that category. If we understand rhythm as something inside belonging to a lyrical type, then it is architectonical form. If we see it as the arrangement of sound material that can be felt and perceived directly by our ears, then it belongs to compositional form.

In his landmark essay "Problema sodergjania, materiala i formyi v slovesnom khudogjestvennom tvortschestve" ("The Question of Content, Material, and Form in the Creation of Art Language") Bakhtin presents pretty adequately his ideas about form in general, as well as factors that contribute to the formation of form in a work of art, particularly the art of language.

Bakhtin's starting position is that *form should be explained in connection with content, inseparably from content* (emphasis added). We find Bakhtin's discussion of the relation between form and content very close to Hegel's. For example, he writes: "The basic function of aesthetics is studying the aesthetic object in its unique fashion. Above all, it is important to understand the aesthetic object in a comprehensive manner, understand form and content in in their fundamental relation, that is, *form as form of*

content and content as content of form, understand the uniqueness and rules of the reciprocal relationships between them" (70; emphasis added). Bakhtin frequently reminds us that "Content is content of this particular form and form is form of this particular content" (42); and "Content and form interpenetrate each other, are inseparable from each other" (34). According to Bakhtin, "form is not contentedness," as some people say, but it is content, a content expressed in a particular form.[1]

Starting with this conception, Bakhtin develops at length the use of form in artistic creation. According to him, "Form on the one hand is material, entirely existing on the basis of material and being inescapably bound to it. On the other hand, its value lies in its ability to take us out of the limits of a work of art because its material is organized and it becomes an object" (24). This reminds us of Hegel's statement quoted above: "The content is not formless, but has the form in its own self, quite as much as the form is external to it. There is thus a doubling of form. At one time it is reflected into itself; and then is identical with the content. At another time it does not at all affect the content." Bakhtin calls this "external" thing, which "does not at all affect the content," the not-yet organized material, the not-yet becoming "artistic significant form" or "aesthetic significant form."

It is worth noting that the terminology Bakhtin used is almost identical with what Bell had used to describe his conception of "significant form." It is not clear if Bakhtin had ever been influenced by Bell (Bakhtin's essays were written ten years after Bell had published *Art*), but in their explanation we see these two authors' common points. For example, when explaining significant form Bakhtin writes: "Artistic significant form is always related to something, it has something through which it is related to and inseparably bound to material" (15). In another place, he writes: "In form *I find myself*, find the positive artistic creativity of form; furthermore, that exists not only in its stage of creativity, not only in its creativity but also when the observation of the art work takes place. To a certain degree I have to experience myself as creator of form so that I can possess the artistic significant form with an aesthetic meaning as is meant by its real essence" (57; my emphasis).

Put another way, "significant form of art" is one that is capable of acting upon the people, provoking in them the impression of being the artist, stirring in them human feelings. Bakhtin explains, "I need to live with the form just like my positive attitude toward content so that I can live with the latter in accordance with aesthetics: in form and through form I sing, tell stories, describe things; through form I demonstrate my own love, my affirmation, my desire" (58). To do so, that is, to become "aesthetic significant form," form must "contain to the full a source of emotional and thinking energy" (14).

This brings us back to Bell's explanation of the function of "significant form": "[S]ignificant form conveys to us an emotion felt by its creator and that beauty conveys nothing" because it "stands charged with the power to provide aesthetic emotion in anyone capable of feeling it" (*Art* 338, 337). It is clear that there are common things

between Bell and Bakhtin. Both use the term "significant form," both affirm the emotional energy condensed in aesthetic form, and both emphasize the artist's role in feeling and transferring aesthetic emotion to his pen. And yet there are vast differences between the two men.

Unlike Bell, Bakhtin employs his conception of "artistic significant form" or "aesthetic significant form" to remind us that the form he is speaking of here has an aesthetic meaning, not a philosophical, social, or moral one. This aesthetic meaning—and this is an important difference between him and Bell—cannot exist outside of its relation with content. Bakhtin writes: "Lying outside of content, that is, outside its relation with the world with its human factors, the world as the object of moral perception and activities, form will not be able to possess an aesthetic meaning, will not be able to realize its fundamental functions*"* (*Voprosyi* 32). This is completely different from Bell's perception of form. "The contemplation of pure form," according to Bell, "leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life" (*Art* 341). In particular, whereas for Bell "significant form" is his essential conception, his distinction between art and non-art, for Bakhtin artistic form, or artistic significant form, must not be seen as everything and confused with material. With this distinction Bakhtin has developed a very important theory of form in the creation of art. He cares more about the role of form in a work of art than about the linkage of form and content, about their interpretation and mutual independence.

Close to Hegel's conception of "the doubling of form"—form is what exists in content and also outside it, is content and external and indifferent to content—is Bakhtin's argument that "form needs to be understood and studied in two ways: (1) from inside a purely[2] aesthetic object as a creative form, that is, form with a value, directed toward form and bound to content; and (2) from inside the entire art work constructed with material" (*Voprosyi* 56).

For Bakhtin material is not form. Form becomes form only when it is related to content and is the form of content. Material must be reorganized in a composition in order to become form. These compositional forms, determined by architectonical forms, are existing forms of contents of artistic or aesthetic views. Thanks to this architectonical form, the content of an artistic view becomes the aesthetic object, an entirely independent entity, which has nothing to do with material. Only when realized by material can an aesthetic object become a work of art.

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From our analysis of the various ideas about form we have seen that form in artistic creation is a very complex concept. These questions need to be explored more: What is artistic form? What element is form and what are its characteristics? First of all, it is important to distinguish the form of a literary work from its artistic form. Artistic form is the inside linked to content whereas the form of a literary work may comprise both artistic form and physical forms, such as covers, paper, print for literature and canvas, paper for painting. What is important here is external physical forms are related

to the mode of existence of a work of art.[3] Nevertheless, artistic form itself as "the inside" compared with the "materialness" of the outside in its turn has two sides: inner form and outer form. For Bakhtin architectonical form is inner form and compositional form is outer form. According to René Wellek and Austin Warren, though the concept of "inner form" had originated from Plotinus and Shastesbury and later was often widely used in German aesthetics, its propagation only complicated the problem. As Wellek and Warren explain, "The boundary line between outer and inner form remains completely obscure" (140).

To solve the difference between form and content or the difference between the abstract and the concrete which had caused an inaccurate explanation of the true nature of a literary work, the Structuralists proposed to substitute the structuralist concept for the concept of form. According to them, this "sums up the whole difference between formalism and structuralism" (Lévi-Strauss 140). In his landmark essay "Structuralism and Form: Reflections on a Work by Vladimir Propp" Claude Lévi-Strauss posits that "Form and content are of the same nature, susceptible to the same analysis. Content draws its reality from its structure and what is called form is the 'structural formation' of the local structure forming the content" (397, 421). Lévi-Strauss further explains: "For [structuralism] the two domains must be absolutely separate, since form alone is intelligible, and content is only a residual deprived of any significant value. For structuralism this opposition does not exist. There is not something abstract on one side and something concrete on the other" (421).

Roman Ingarden, a structuralist and strong critic of Formalism, offered a phenomenological approach to literature. "A literary work," he writes, "can be understood as a product of the author's creative activities, which are purely subjective and intentional" (*Issledovania* 156). Ingarden does not analyze a literary work on the basis of form and content but rather in accordance with a "two-dimensioned, multi-layered concept" (156). In the first dimension, according to Ingarden, a literary work has at least four layers: (1) sounds of words and the combination of language at a high order, (2) combinations with definite meanings (meanings of words and sentences), (3) described objects (human beings, things, factors), and (4) schematic objects.[4] In Ingarden's view, this concept allows us to "explain the nature of all the elements of a literary work and show its unique structure and specific mode of existence of a work of art, as well as the relation between the author, his work, the reader, and finally its attitude toward the real world" (176).

Ingarden, Bakhtin, and Lévi-Strauss, while basing their concept of artistic form on different methodologies, have one thing in common: their recognition of the role of form and its relation to content in the Hegelian tradition, and their rejection of Formalism advocated by Bell and the Russian Formalists. Known as Neo-Formalism, this school of thought has many valid points. Nevertheless, argues Noel Carroll, it does not offer a satisfactory explanation of the nature of artistic form, because "what we call the artistic form of a work depends upon our conception of the content of the work. But

the notion of content . . . is excessively ambiguous" (137). In many cases even "not all works of art possess content" (153).

Another difficulty is although it is widely accepted that content determines form and has an impact on form, we do not know much about their relationship and how content influences form. These questions are not easy to answer. Many problems should be addressed here. For example, when Hegel uses the word "Form" he implies two meanings: "Form of the Movement" and "Form of the Realization." If form is the existing form of content (for Hegel it is "the absolute idea") in its process of movement, then the meaning "content transforming into form" would be easy to understand, for form (for classicism, for example) is no other than the idea that finds its existing form in that stage of movement. But if form is the outside that materializes the inside, then how the inside transforms into the outside, and how it determines the outside Hegel does not clearly explain. Bakhtin is aware of this when he asks: "How can form, which is completely based on material, become form of the content and be inseparable from the content in terms of value, or to put it differently, how can compositional form, that is, the organization of material, realize architectonical form, that is, the realization of the unity and organization of these perceptive and moral values?" (57). The question is more succinctly asked in another place: "How can form as the materialization by way of language of the subjective active attitude toward content become the creative form and the form that completes the content?" (59).

According to Bakhtin's explanation, "the creative activity of the author-creator and of receiver embraces all the aspects of language. Thanks to them he can create a form capable of completing and directing at the content" (62). Bakhtin differentiates five factors of language as the material of literature [5] and describes the artist's and the receiver's creative self as it goes into the material and the language. According to him, the fifth factor, that is, the sensation of the active nature of language, the sensation of the active creation of the sound, is said to be the governing factor, the focus of creative energies.

Bakhtin's explanation, which is deeply "Bakhtinian," is more influenced by philosophy than literary study. Nevertheless, it is one of his rare efforts to understand how "content transforms into form," how the form inside transforms into the form outside (Phương Lựu 77). In fact, the relationship between form and content had been debated for a very long time. It was even mentioned in Eastern aesthetics very early. However, the process of transforming from content into form, from idea into utterance had not been clearly presented. For example, in ancient Chinese aesthetics we often come across the concept that "Tao is the origin of Literature" (Tao exists before literature), or "In the mind it is *chi*; expressed in words it is poetry." Going from Tao to literature is an extremely complex procedure, just as to become poetry *chi* has to undergo many stages and assume many styles of development. *Chi* exists in many types, not just in poetry. But it is not easy to know when *chi* gets into poetry and becomes poetry. Liu Xie reiterates this in *Wensindaolong*: "Because feelings are

different, literature has to adopt different techniques to describe them; it is impossible not to use feelings to create the essence of literature" (qtd. in Phương Lựu 64). But Liu Xie's explanation, like Hegel's, is too general. Bakhtin's concept about the shaping and nature of the novel as a literary genre in famous works like *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* has a very important significance in the application of methodology and poetics to study artistic form in general and a literary work in particular.

*

A study of artistic form in the context of its relation to content, as has been seen, is a correct approach. It allows us to identify the main features of form and the nature, function, and especially meaning of form in artistic creation and eventually that of art in man's life. Nevertheless, the absolutization of the relation between content and form and especially the absolute subjugation of form to content will gradually lead to misconceptions not only in theory but also in the practice of artistic creation.

When speaking of the meaning of artistic form the first thing we often hear is, form assists content. How can it be? Confucius said: "Unrefined language cannot go too far." Liu Xie also writes: "Because books and teachings by the Ancients are called literature, how can they not be literary? Purified water becomes ripples. Trees yielding hard wood will eventually blossom. Brightness depends on essence. If tigers and leopards have brown furs but no stripes, they are no different from dogs and goats. Rhinos' thick skins are red because this color gives them beauty" (qtd. in Phương Lựu 65- 66). Here the function of form is to intensify the beauty of content. Nowadays this concept is becoming more and more popular. As Vladimir Soloviev explains, "The perfect beauty of form increases the speed of the spirit embodied in it" (qpt. in Phạm Vĩnh Cư 72).

In addition to that purpose of beautification, form has a much more important function: it brings to content, which is an essence, a realist material existence. "Aesthetic object," Bakhtin explains, "only exists through the creation of a work of art that employs concrete material (aesthetic vision existing outside art is impure, because of the lack of the adequate organization of material to a certain extent as when viewing Nature); before this work is created and independently separated from this creation the aesthetic object did not exist; it actually exists for the first time with the work" (*Voprosyi* 55). Bakhtin also develops this idea elsewhere, especially in *Problems of Dostoesky's Poetics*: "Without understanding this new form of visualization, one cannot correctly understand that which was seen and unveiled in life for the first time with the help of that form. Artistic form, correctly understood, does not shape already prepared and found content, but rather permits content to be found and seen for the first time" (34). Bakhtin's ideas, as we have seen, are extremely important. Not only do they explain clearly the essence of the relation of content and form; they also elevate artistic form to a higher level where form no longer has a secondary role but is as important as content, born at the same time as content and inseparable from content. If there is no

form, if there is no way to use words, colours, lines, and sounds, content itself is still far from not being definite and complete. Material and the organization of material will not only bring to content an outer form but also make content become complete and perfect. "Ideas," Lev Vuigodsky writes, "cannot be expressed in language but rather be accomplished in language" (323). Failing to understand this means failing to understand the nature of artistic creation and the function of and difficulty in the study of form in artistic creation.

The difficulty lies in the fact that the artist has to find a form in which the content appears complete, perfect, and final. But this is not an easy task because the content that the artist wants to describe is quite different from ordinary information. In non-literary texts like official and scientific documents, for example, because the content usually has a single and specially determined meaning and its transformation into the new form is simple enough, it is not too difficult to understand it. But artistic content is different. It is man's spiritual world. It is his anxiety about truth and about good and evil, love of beauty, passionate yearning for happiness and freedom. It is also about hope and despair. Artistic content is not a composite of *a priori* ideas and general feelings, but it comprises incomplete thoughts, unknown vibrations, vague emotions, and impressions. As T.S. Eliot says, "[F]eeling and emotion are particular, whereas thought is general" (8). Such meanings and emotions, like life, always grow, change, multiply, are private, never get finalized. To give an appropriate form to this living being that is private, multi-faced, always changing is extremely difficult. It was not accidental that Confucius said in *The Analects*: "If essence is more than form, literature risks being coarse; if form is more than essence, literature risks being empty. Essence and form rightly combined is the gentleman's Tao" (qpt. in Phương Lựu 28). Rightness as a requirement for literature is also what Hegel saw as a prerequisite for a work of art: "A work of art that wants the right form is for that reason no right or true work of art" (*Encyclopedia* 289).

But what is "the right form"? Art has chosen for its special content a right form known as images. Artistic images with their diverse, half real and half unreal meanings are the rightest form for the special nature of content in art. But what is the "right" form and how can it be done? Should structure be suitable with material as the Structuralists advocated? Should language be splendid enough to match the grandeur of ideas according to traditional Oriental aestheticians? Or should one search for the best way to express what one wants to write about? The feeling about the difficulty of finding a right form of expression is a haunting desire common to all artists and writers. Liu Xie is aware of this when he writes: "At the moment [the writer] starts to write, that euphoric sensation still multiplies a thousand times. When he finishes, he finds he could not even say half of what he had wanted to say!" (qtd. in Dương Ngọc Dũng 211). Bùi Xuân Phái once confessed: "It is not easy to paint as you really want!" (72).

To paint and to write right what the artist has in mind and as he wishes is his creative need. It is also a requirement for all creation of artistic form. However, if we

think that creative artistic activities are not simply a process of moving from the artist to his work but also going from his work to the audience, then aesthetic value of work does not only lie in the fact that the artist has found a "right" form to express his idea, but rather in the fact that the audience feel that the artist has so rightly and adequately represented what they thought and felt but did not know how to express. The appeal of the work in part derives from similarities between the writer's and the reader's living experience. This coincidence is possible because this living experience is contained in the content and expressed through the form. "Artistic value," Dostoevsky explains, "is the writer's ability to present his ideas through the characters and images so clearly that the reader can understand the writer's ideas as well as the latter understands his own ones" (68-69). Tolstoy also has this to say about artistic creation:

> A work of art is considered a real artistic work when the receiver cannot imagine anything better than what he has seen, heard, understood, when he feels he remembers something that he might have encountered many times, that he seems to have known for a long time, only that he does not know to express it and now somebody says it for him. And if the receiver feels that the artist says for him something different, then it is no longer art. (343)

It is obvious that artistic creation is inseparable from the artist's creation of form. But for "inner forms" or forms that Bakhtin calls "architectonical forms" the artist's subjective efforts are completely limited, because, as Bakhtin explains, this is not what he can create and arrange as he does for "compositional forms," but they are "the forms of aesthetic man's spiritual and physical values, the forms of nature as man's living environment, the forms of events in their personal, social, and historical aspects." To put it another way, inner form is directly determined by the artist's spiritual world, ideas, and emotions. Artists do not "create" it; they only express it, or more exactly, they strive to make it manifest itself in their work thanks to "outer forms" such as material and techniques. This perception of the relationship between inner form and content is very close to the general understanding of the relation between literature and Tao in ancient Chinese and Vietnamese aesthetics. Artists do not create literature. Literature emerges from the Mind, from Tao, is the outer appearance of Tao and the Mind, inextricably tied to them. Tao is literature's spirit and soul. If Tao changes, literature will change. If the Mind is clear, literature will shine. This type of form is created not because of the artist's talent but because it is the work of Tao and the Mind. That is why in the East people say talent is derived from emotions.

Nevertheless, in art in addition to inner form there is outer form. Outer form, however, is related to content through inner form, not directly related to it. In spite of this, its *sludjebnost* (serviceableness) to content, to use Bakhtin's phrase, is quite obvious. This means that in artistic creation the artist has to create *right* outer forms capable of not only expressing what he wants but also knowing that the audience appreciate his speaking on their behalf exactly what they want. But is the function and

meaning of the creation of outer forms just that? Is that all we need to know about the difficulty of creating forms? We will have to examine further this problem.

According to Hegel, in art "sensuous shapes and sounds present themselves, *not simply for their own sake and for that of their immediate structure*, but with the purpose of affording in that shape satisfaction to higher spiritual interests, seeing that they are powerful to call forth a response and echo in the mind from the depths of consciousness" (*Aesthetics* 44; emphasis added). For Hegel in an artistic work besides satisfying a different purpose, forms appear for their own sake. Outer form can be considered perfect even when the content it expresses does not meet what authentic art requires. As Baudelaire explains, "Words by themselves and independent with the meaning they are meant to express (that is to say, independent with the meaning of their vocabulary) have their own beauty and value" (qtd. in Jakobson 83). Nevertheless, creating a satisfying form in art is not easy. Not only does the artist have bring to the content a suitable form, he has to do the best he can to make that form exist "for its own sake"; in other words, he ought to perfect it so it can bring the audience a delightful aesthetic feeling. What is difficult is, he may succeed in presenting the idea but fails to find beautiful diction to express it. If he tries to search for beautiful diction, he might have to give up the idea. That is "a double difficulty" that not everybody can overcome. It is not by accident that poet Tế Hanh says:

> After reading a good poem
> My first idea is I can do it
> My last idea is I feel powerless.

That sense of powerlessness is what any writer can clearly feel. In order to understand adequately the meaning of artistic form and the artist's talent, it is important to distinguish these two aspects of the function of form. The process of artistic creation is always a combination of two different currents of feelings: "life feelings" and "aesthetic feelings." Xuân DiÇu has made an excellent observation of the artist's psychological process in these words: "When I speak of emotions, I speak not only of emotional vibrations, for one can be moved so much and so sincerely that tears come out. But tears are not necessarily poetry. When I speak of emotions, I mean to speak of emotional vibrations which come simultaneously with *a spout of rhythm, imagery, sounds. What a delightful creation*!" (55; emphasis added).

"A spout of rhythm, imagery, sounds" is the content of "significant form" that Bell has spoken of. Words, colours, sounds that do not contain these vibrations are not authentic artistic forms. Thanks to these "delightful" vibrations felt by the artist, his work can bring to the audience a special kind of vibration known as aesthetic vibration.

For the ordinary layman aesthetic vibration is not easy to experience any time. Rather, it depends on his situation of appreciation, on the "spout of rhythm, imagery, sounds" that the artist brings to his work, and on the audience's personality and appreciation ability. Generally, one experiences only "emotional vibrations." Even for

the creator it is not always easy to be plunge into "a spout of rhythm, imagery, sounds" strong enough to absorb the audience totally. The artist differs from the layman not in his emotions and ideas but in his ability to master his words, his pen, his keyboard. His aim is to bring to the audience his perception of beauty and perfection—that is, to "defamiliarize" the all-too familiar and find newer and independent ways of self-expression. Because we tend to abuse the concept of talent, we do not see the boundary between the real and the unreal, unwittingly lower the value of talent, and consequently debase art.

Beside its social meaning art has another function greater than we thought: its role in the development of man. Art, as Hegel puts it, is a "form" of idea, consciousness, and spirituality that is existing and developing. Man's perception is something that grows and progresses in art. So does his spiritual life because in art he is freer, more sensible and humane. Thanks to art, his emotional life is also enriched, refined, meaningful. Art is the fertile soil that nourishes the qualities and spiritual values man has accumulated during his striving to shred his primitiveness to become what Marx called a "species-being," that is, one with a consciousness.[7]

Artistic creation enables the artist to control material and successfully use his skills and techniques. In this process he also gets "a delight of creation" capable of bringing immeasurable happiness. Thanks to the artist's search for and discovery of form, his experience with "vibrations of rhythm, imagery, sounds," the public also is familiarized with what is called "aesthetic feelings." Aesthetic feelings enrich man's life, boost his spirit, make him feel more valuable as a person, change the world into a better place. By exposing himself to art for an extended period of time man can learn to perceive more beautiful things in the world with his own eyes. Being able to hear and distinguish very fine shades of music, for example, is another great advantage of long practicing art. Art opens another door, another way for man to reach an extremely vast world full of voices, sounds, lights, and colours in life and in nature. Art brings to the audience, therefore, a source of pleasure and happiness similar to the artist's "joy of creation." Creating artistic forms thus conceived contributes to the perfection of man, to the full development of the spiritual world and the senses connected to its spirit and body. Artistic creation of forms has not only an artistic but humanistic significance.

Practically, artistic creation especially in poetry and fine art in the world in the 20th century and the early 21st century shows that form basically has undergone many changes—its expression becomes daunting, multi-faced, much harder to comprehend. We always want to encourage novel innovations, but it is not easy to accept them right of hand, especially for ourselves. If our taste is tainted by prejudice and ideology, it will be worse. For this reason, a proper attitude to artistic form in our manner of exploration, creation, perception, and appreciation of the literary work is a great challenge to the creator and the public. There is no limit to novelty, only limit to mediocrity. Not every colour, word, sound carries a meaning, or is significant, symbolic, or metaphoric. The meaning of a form may be found in the form itself. Here it is

impossible to substitute the words for the feeling or the utterances, or the lines and the colours for the idea. Here is the place of talent. It is difficult to find talent in creation; it is perhaps even more difficult to find talent in the appreciation of colours, words, and sounds.

That has been enough to show how difficult the creation of form in art is. But the difficulty already presupposes the significance and function of art. Therefore, to advocate strongly for novelty in creation of form is to advocate for creation in art. To a certain extent, it means to advocate for man's total development and freedom.

NOTES

This translation is based on Lê Ngọc Trà's original essay entitled "Hình théc và ý ngh)a cça Hình théc trong Sáng t¡o NghÇ thu-t" (*TuyÃn t-p* 82-130). I would like to thank the author for preparing a special version of his work for Western readers and for assisting me in completing the translation. Book titles and quoted texts in Russian are provided by the author. All the translations from the Vietnamese are mine.

1. Bakhtin's expression *Xoderjatennaia khudojextvennaia forma*" has been inaccurately translated as "artistic form bearing content." This has led to the concept that artistic form is not pure technique but close to content. This translation is not only inaccurate, but also does not correctly represent Bakhtin's idea. For Bakhtin form is not related or close to content, but *is* content. The entire text of Bakhtin's thought is as follows: "Language with its definite linguistics does not go inside the aesthetic object but stays behind the latter. The aesthetic object itself is constructed from the content which is aesthetically formalized or from the artistic form of the content" (*Voprosyi literaturyi i estetiki*ally 49).
2. By "pure" Bakhtin means the aesthetic object is not bound yet to the material.
3. For an examination of mode of existence of a literary work, see René Wellek and Austin Warren 142-59 and Ingarden 21-91.
4. See Ingarden. 28-29. Ingarden calls "schematic figures"("Vidyi") images, paintings in their general forms like things seen from a distance, with lines and shapes not yet clearly defined. Such figures are not simply seen through the eyes, but rather they are determined by the characteristics of the object being observed and the observer's psychophysiology when he conducts the observation.
5. Five elements of language include (1) the sonic or musical quality of language; (2) the meanings of words and their nuances and variations; (3) the relationship of words; (4) the multidimensionality of speakers' relationships as shown in the psychological, emotional, intellectual spheres of the language being used; and (5) impressions of the active nature of language, particularly its creation of meaningful sounds. See Bakhtin, *Voprosyi* 62.
6. According to Marx, whereas the animal is not conscious of its species, man recognizes not only his individuality but also what exists beside him, that is, his species. It is man's "conscious life activity" that distinguishes him from "animal life activity," making him what Marx calls a "species-being." For Marx's discussion of *Gattunswesen* (species-being), see his "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844)" in *Early Writings*. New York: Vintage Books, 1975.

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Acting Contrary to Rationality and Instincts: the Inherent Similarity of Dostoevsky's "Self-will" and Max Scheler's "Spirit"

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Acting rationally and consistently with the demands of biological instincts seems to be the overall norm for humans. Still, there are thinkers who have shown that in a deeper sense, this is not an absolute norm at all and there are exclusions that should be taken into account if we wish to understand the true nature of a human. These thinkers, in particular, are Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) and Max Scheler (1874 - 1928). In this article, I depict the peculiarities of each of the authors' views on freedom of will and action, and, at the same time, I will show that their ideas are implicitly similar. Dostoevsky did not know Scheler, of course; it is likely that Scheler read some of Dostoevsky's work, although Scheler does not cite him.

I start with Dostoevsky. In the first part of the article, I consider three cases; two presented in *Devils* (1871-1872) and one presented in *A Writer's Diary*. I will call the cases 1) the bizarre marriage, 2) Kirillov's suicide, and 3) revolt against nature. Then, I discuss the idea of self-will as presented in Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* (1864). The second part of the article addresses Max Scheler's concept of spirit and its ability and disposition to control and direct human instincts.

Dostoevsky was not a philosopher; he was a philosophically and religiously oriented fiction writer. Being a writer, he, even more than many other writers, has not always been logically consistent in delivering and proving his ideas, as philosophers, as a rule, have to be. It is always hard to separate what he thought himself as a person from what his heroes "thought". Moreover, Dostoevsky is especially well known for being split, in himself as a person and not only within a set of his heroes, and that is why his novels are sometimes called "symphonic".

As to our study, it is important to mention one specific trait from the very beginning. The method with the help of which Dostoevsky presents many of his ideas may be called a method "from the opposite". This means that he starts with a very bright and convincing depiction of his idea, so that the reader becomes fully of the opinion that Dostoevsky stands for this idea and that he likes it. The idea that is presented first is often "bad", insofar as it shows a malign or weird feature of a human. Only afterward, and often not even in this very novel or work of art but rather in a letter to someone, Dostoevsky clarifies that he only meant to show the wrongfulness of that idea and that he stands completely against it. It may also be the case that having presented the "bad" idea or a hero's trait as a central point, he surrounds and completes it, often in other parts of the novel and not in the section where the very idea is presented, by some hints and vague details, which, in their thorough consideration, partly or entirely change the idea's or trait's original meaning. It is widely recognized that in depicting the "bad", weird or atheistic personages, Dostoevsky had more success than when trying to draw a picture of a saint or a deep believer. For example, Alyosha in *The Karamazov Brothers* is clearly a pale and lifeless figure in comparison with his fool-blooded brothers Ivan and Dmitrij.

In Dostoyevsky's understanding, self-will is an arbitrary freedom of will and action. Going a little bit ahead of myself and including Max Scheler's notion of spirit into our discussion, we may state that what Scheler calls spirit is very close to self-will; their chief common trait is arbitrariness. Given this similarity in the views of these thinkers, we can pose a question: are self-will and spirit predominantly a) evil, b) good, or c) ambiguous? As far as Dostoevsky is concerned, self-will is deeply ambiguous or, more accurately, has two levels. On its lower level, self-will is close to caprice, i.e., it is bad, but on its higher level, self-will turns into the freedom of self-sacrifice and serving others and, as such, becomes good.

Having said that, I invite the reader to consider the first of the three cases: the bizarre marriage of Nikolai Stavrogin, one of the chief personages in *Devils*. He confesses to Tihon that

> It was then, too (but not for any particular reason), that I had the idea of finding something to blight and cripple my life, something thoroughly revolting. For a year or more now I had been thinking of shooting myself, but now something rather better hove into view. Lebyadkin's lame sister, Marya Timofeyevna, was still doing occasional domestic work for various lodgers, since at this stage she was not so much insane as retarded and prone to fits of rapturous emotion — not to mention being secretly head-over-heels in love with me (as those in my circle had managed to discover). Once when I was looking at her, I suddenly made up my mind to marry her. The thought of a marriage between Stavrogin and such an abject creature gave me quite a *frisson.* Who could imagine anything more grotesque! (Dostoevsky 2005, p. 434).

Both biological instinct and social demands prompt you to marry the best partner you can out of your milieu. Stavrogin acts directly to the contrary of this instinct. He chooses the worst variant of partner available to him. How can we explain that? On the surface, it looks like a caprice of a blasé man, being, in addition, somewhat weird. As a matter of fact, however, this seemingly bizarre act is, for Dostoevsky, a demonstration of what he calls "self-will" and, going further in his logic, a deliberate demonstration of one's freedom.

Let us turn now to another, much better known episode from *Devils*. This is the suicide of Alexey Kirillov. The following dialogue of Kirillov with a secondary personage, who wishes to gain from Kirillov's death, provides us with con text for the suicide:

"I've always been surprised at everyone's going on living," said Kirillov…If there is no God, then I am God."

"There, I could never understand that point of yours: why are you God?"

"If God exists, all is His will and from His will I cannot escape. If not, it's all my will and I am bound to show self-will."

"Self-will? But why are you bound?"

'"Because all will has become mine. Can it be that no one in the whole planet, after making an end of God and believing in his own will, will dare to express his self-will on the most vital point?"…

"I am bound to shoot myself because the highest point of my self-will is to kill myself with my own hands."

"But you won't be the only one to kill yourself; there are lots of suicides."

"With good cause. But to do it without any cause at all, simply for self-will, I am the only one."… (Dostoevsky 2005, pp. 635-636).

"For three years I've been seeking for the attribute of my godhead and I've found it; the attribute of my godhead is self-will! That's all I can do to prove in the highest point my independence and my new terrible freedom. For it is very terrible. I am killing myself to prove my independence and my new terrible freedom" (Dostoevsky 2005, pp. 638).

An idea that is rather close to that of Kirillov's was later presented in Dostoevsky's *A Writer's Diary* in October 1876, in the section "Verdict". There, a person decides to kill himself out of a revolt against nature; the ground is that nature has created him against his will and is going to kill him soon afterward without asking him for permission or opinion and not taking into account his own freedom to choose. Suicide as a revolt against nature is also an act of acquiring and manifesting one's freedom, accompanied with throwing away any rationality and despising the instinctive demand of biological survival imposed by this very nature (Dostoevsky (1972-90), 1981, Vol. 23, p. 146-148).

Let us now discuss some hidden implications of these three fiction situations depicted by Dostoevsky.

1. Bizarre marriage. At first glance, the situation may be treated as weird on the behalf of Stavrogin; that is, doing harm to oneself without any grounds on which to justify the harm. There are circumstances that bring some sense to Stavrogin's decision, though. Out of the censored and originally excluded chapter "At Tihon's", we know that Stavrogin once raped a little girl. Although he speaks of that episode in a snobbish way, as if nothing special has happened, some details reveal that he is actually conscience-stricken. He explains that after the rape: "For a year or more now I had been thinking of shooting myself". (Dostoevsky 2005, p. 434). He finally does commit suicide and, as we can surmise, not because of the motives that moved Kirillov but because of so heavy a burden of evil that he carried and multiplied for all his life. He says that the raped girl came to him in his dreams, as if to take revenge on him for the

committed crime. Stavrogin really did much out of his evil "self-will" and contrary to common-sense rationality, but he forgot nothing, as he claims, and the very fact that he came to Tihon to give his confession tells us much. Moreover, it is exactly such people who may go further in their repentance and become spiritual teachers for younger sinners because they intimately know the mechanisms of sin. In summary, Stavrogin really does act a great deal out of his capricious and arbitrary self-will; however, at least a part of those acts are directed by motives. Having motives means having at least a small amount of rationality. Thus, he acted (at least some of the time) out of rationality and not only out of the arbitrariness of evil. However, he never does rise up to a higher stage of self-will.

2. Kirillov's suicide. Kirillov does not see the final stage in his own suicide, nor does he want to become a new God; that is, gain some advantages from his act. He purely and altruistically wishes his own act to contribute to furthering a better state of mankind.

> If you recognize it, you are sovereign, and then you won't kill yourself but will live in the greatest glory. But one, the first, must kill himself, for else who will begin and prove it? So I must certainly kill myself, to begin and prove it… I will begin and will make an end of it and open the door, and will save. That's the only thing that will save mankind and will recreate the next generation physically, for with his present physical nature man can't get on without his former God, I believe. (Dostoevsky 2005, pp. 637).

Kirillov's motives are the motives of the salvation of mankind through the price of his own death. There are elements of oddity, as with many of Dostoevsky's heroes, but in principle, this manifestation of self-will is not of a capricious and totally arbitrary kind, according to our distinction between the two types of self-will; rather, it is of the higher, self-sacrificial type of self-will.

3. Revolt against nature. In *A Writer's Diary* in December 1876, Dostoevsky answered his critics who understood him to be completely opposite to who he was, according to his complaints. He tells his readers that a personage who is blaming nature is the one whom Dostoevsky criticizes as a flat materialist and non-believer; that is, a man possessing an incorrect worldview (Dostoevsky (1972-90), 1982, Vol. 24, pp. 46-49).

In the talk with the author of the memoirs on Dostoevsky, L. Kh. Khokhrjakova, Dostoevsky gave the following comment: "I wished to show there that one cannot live without Christianity" (Dostoevsky (1972-90), 1981, Vol. 23, a note to p. 147, contained on p. 408 [The translation from Russian into English is made by the author of this article – A.A]).

In *A Writer's Diary* in February 1877, he clearly explains what real freedom is in his view. This explanation is relevant to a holistic understanding of Dostoevsky's conception of freedom and is applicable to all the cases in Dostoevsky's writings of the distinction between the ostentatious and capricious self-will and its conscious and purposeful application.

> …The real freedom consists only in overcoming oneself and one's will, so to finally reach the moral state when you are always and at every moment the real master of yourself. … The highest freedom is not to save and supply yourself with money, but "share all you have and go serve everyone". If man is able to do that, if he is able to take such a control over himself, is he not free after that? This is the highest manifestation of will! (Dostoevsky (1972-90), 1983, Vol. 25, p. 62 [The translation from Russian into English is made by the author of this article – A.A]).

There is also a fragment in a letter to N.L. Ozmidov, dated February 1878, where Dostoevsky gets very near to Max Scheler's understanding of spirit. The core of the idea is that spirit stands higher than biology and nature in general.

> If my "I" has comprehended this all [laws of nature – A.A,], my "I" is higher to this all, at least, it goes beyond the bounds of this all, takes as if a side position to this all, judging it and cognizing it. But, in this case "I" is not only subject to the axioms of Earth and the laws of Earth but transcends them, has a law of a higher order … It does not confine itself to the Earth order but strives for something more than only Earth, something to which it belongs itself (Dostoevsky (1972-90), 1988, Vol. 30 (1), p. 10 [The translation from Russian into English is made by the author of this article – A.A]).

I now discuss the idea of self-will as it is expressed in *Notes from the Underground*. At first glance, it is chapters seven and eight that interest us at most as the others contain nothing more than the endless grumbling of a sick man. The more attentive and sophisticated explorer, however, can single out as many as four layers in the text, which interweave and manifest the different sides and meanings of self-will. Let us try to separate those meanings:

The first layer is the lowest type of self-will, meaning mostly one's caprice, which is often an evil or unsocial one.

> I am not advocating suffering, nor prosper-ity either. I'm advocating . . . caprice, and that it be guaran-teed to me when I need it (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 34).

> [B]ecause man has always and every-where, whoever he was, loved to act as he wants and not in the least as his reason and personal advantage dictates; it is possible to desire against one's own best interest, and sometimes one *positively should* (this is my idea). One's own, independent, and free desire, one's own, albeit wild, caprice, one's fantasy, sometimes provoked to the point of madness—it is indeed all of this that comprises that omitted, that most advantageous advantage, which does not fall into any category, and which continually results in all systems and theories being sent to the devil (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 26-27).

> There is only one instance, just one, when man may deliberately, consciously desire something injurious, foolish, even extremely foolish, namely: in order to have the right to desire even something very foolish,

> and not to be bound by an obligation to desire only what is intelligent (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 29).

The plots of some of Dostoevsky's novels contain scenes where people throw out millions of rubles just because of their capricious pride.

The second layer of the idea of free-will manifests in a discussion with Russian materialists of the 1860s, such as Pisarev, who claimed to know beforehand what human rationality is, namely, material well-being. Those flat materialists were ready to engage in building the Palace of people's happiness on Earth, and in Russia in particular. On the one side, this is a question of paternalism, which was actually realized under the Bolsheviks, and on the other side, this is a contradiction between collectivism and individualism, where Dostoevsky takes the part of individualism and individual decisions. Studying this aspect of Dostoevsky's criticism of modern, to him, theories of rationality is made central in (Scanlan 1999).

The third layer is expressed in the following passages:

> What about all the millions of facts that bear witness to people *knowingly,* that is to say fully understanding their real advant-ages, putting them into the background and flinging them-selves onto another path, at risks, at chances, and not because anyone or anything has forced them to do so, but as if not wishing to follow the appointed path they stubbornly and willfully thrust their way along another, difficult, absurd one, barely able to make it out in the darkness? Well, it means that man really finds this obstinacy and willfulness more pleasant than any kind of advantage to himself (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 22).

> And from where did all these sages get the idea that man needs some kind of normal, some kind of virtuous desire? Why have they unfailingly imagined that man definitely needs sensible, advantageous desire? Man needs one thing only: *independent* desire, whatever that independence costs and wherever it may lead him (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 27).

I would like to point out the words "risks", "chances" and "independence" in the quotations above. These words give a clue to yet another meaning of self-will in Dostoevsky's mind. The writer had nothing to do with economic theory, of course. However, what he is telling us here is propagating risk-taking economical behavior instead of being satisfied with a lesser, though guarantied and stable, profit. Behavior of such a type can be far more than merely economical. All of the endeavors of scientists, discoverers, conquerors, and all types of adventurers require self-will and individual freedom, and such individual traits are indeed sought after in the explorations. They value individual independence and avoid the benevolence of others and any kind of governance over their acts.

Finally, and most importantly, as the fourth layer, Dostoevsky aims to prove that only following and supporting self-will and independence can mold personality and individuality out of a herd man. According to Max Scheler, spirit is the main trait that distinguishes a human from an animal. Thus, Dostoevsky's self-will in its fourth meaning makes this notion actually similar to Scheler's spirit. It is at this point that the two thinkers collide. Their like-mindedness is expressed in the idea that the main virtue of both "self-

will" and "spirit" consists in letting man transcend the laws of nature to make of himself man, not animal. The last lines in both quotations below manifest the idea that man preserves his being a man proper exactly and only by his self-will or spirit:

> You see, this very foolish thing is your caprice, and in actual fact, gentlemen, it can be more advantageous to us all than anything else on earth, especially on certain occasions. But in particular it can be more advantageous than any other advantage in a situation where it leads us to obvious harm and contradicts the soundest conclu-sions of our reason on the subject of advantages—because in any case it preserves the thing that is most important and precious to us, which is our personality and our individuality (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 29).
>
> He will even jeopardize his gingerbread and deliberately wish for the most ruinous rubbish, the most uneconomical nonsense, simply in order to print his own disastrous, fantastic element onto all this positive good sense. It is just his fantastic dreams, his abject foolishness that he wants to cling on to, solely in order that he can convince himself (as if it were absolutely necessary) that people are still people and not piano-keys, on which the laws of nature themselves are playing with their own hands, but are threatening to go on playing to the point when they would no longer be able to want anything beyond the directory. And besides: even in that case, even if he did turn out to be a piano-key, if that were proven to him by even the natural sciences and mathematically, he would still not come to his senses, and would deliberately do something to contra-dict it, simply out of ingratitude; just in order to assert himself. And in a situation where he did not have the means to do it, he would invent chaos and destruction, he would think up various forms of suffering, and—my goodness!—he'd assert himself. He would unleash his curse on the world, and since it is only man that can swear (this is a privilege that to a large extent differentiates him from the other animals) he might achieve his aim through his curse alone, that is he would really convince himself that he is a man and not a piano-key. If you say that even all this can be calculated on tables, the chaos, the gloom, and the curses, so that the possibility alone of a preliminary calculation would put a stop to everything and reason would hold sway—well, in that case man would delib-erately go mad in order to escape his reason and assert himself. I believe this, I will vouch for it because this whole human business seems really only to consist of the fact that man has been continually proving to himself that he's a man and not an organ-stop (Dostoevsky 1991, p. 31).

Max Scheler

The work in which Scheler has presented his concept of spirit most fully is *The Human Place in the Cosmos* (herein, '*Cosmos…*') (Scheler 2009). Originally, '*Cosmos…*' was read as a report at a scientific meeting in 1927 and then printed as a brochure in 1928, only a few months before Scheler's sudden death. Many ideas dealing with

spirit, directly or indirectly, had been expressed by Scheler previously, particularly in *The Nature of Sympathy* (herein, '*Sympathy…*') (Scheler 2011) and, sporadically, in other works.

Below are key quotations from the '*Cosmos…*', where Scheler's concept of spirit is expressed in its most explicit form.

> *What, then, is this 'spirit*,' this novel and decisive principle? […] [T]he ultimate determination of a being with spirit – no matter what its psycho-physical makeup – is its *existential detachment from organic being*, its freedom and detachability and the detachment of its center of existence from the bondage to, the pressure of, and the *organic* dependence on 'life' and everything which belongs to life, and thus also its detachment from its own drive-related "intelligence". […] Hence, a being having spirit is not tied anymore to its drives and environment… (Scheler 2009, pp. 26-27). […] [T]his being – most remarkably – is also able *to objectify its very own physiological and psychic nature* and to also objectify its every single vital function. It is for this reason that this being can also be free to commit suicide (Scheler 2009, p. 29).
>
> Insofar as he is a 'person', only the human being is able to soar far above his status as a living entity and, from a center beyond the spatio-temporal world, make everything the object of his knowledge, including himself. It is in this sense that the human being as spirit is superior to both himself and to the world. Thus he is also open to irony and humor, which always imply the ability to rise above one's own existence. The center, however, from which the human being acts out his acts and from which he objectifies his lived body, his psyche, and the space and time of the world, cannot itself be a 'part' of the world and cannot have any 'where' and 'when': this center can only lie in the supreme Ground of Being itself (Scheler 2009, p. 33).
>
> Having become human, he could not really say anymore, 'I am a part of the world and enclosed by it' – for the act-being of his spirit and person is superior even to the forms of the being of the 'world' in space and time… [A]t exactly the same moment when this 'human being' placed himself outside nature to make it an object to be dominated and an object of novel principles of arts and signs – at exactly the same moment he had to anchor his very own center of being somehow outside and away from the cosmos. (Scheler 2009, pp. 63-64).

What is decisive in the characteristics of spirit presented above and in what sense is it compatible with Dostoevsky's characterization of man's freedom (self-will in the higher sense)? The decisive factors for both thinkers are twofold. First, when conceptualizing the world as if from the outside, man is no more a part of the world; he is torn out of it. It is like this: either you are placed on the Earth and look on yourself as a part of it, or you are viewing it as if from a spacecraft and thus are not a part of it. Second, spirit or self-will, being not a part of the world, should be a part of some more

profound entity, thus giving them a soil for being placed at and attached to (Wyman 2007). For Dostoevsky, this is an Orthodox Christian platform. Let me invite the reader to turn back to the content of Dostoevsky's letter to Ozmidov, where the respective ideas are presented. For Scheler, spirit is a more unusual Deity of a pantheistic kind, which he calls "the supreme Ground of Being" (for a more detailed description of Scheler's religious views, see my article - A.A.).

For Dostoevsky, the key point of negation is flat rationality, which occurs mostly in the form of material well-being, which, according to him, is overcome, thrown away and conquered by self-will. As for Scheler, he is not so much engaged with rationality proper; rather, he elaborates on the topic of biological instincts, namely, spirit's ability to deliberately inhibit or un-inhibit and direct or redirect instincts.

With respect to human beings, Scheler writes that "the express un-inhibition of drives is introduced by spirit in the same sense as rational drive-*asceticism* (animals do not have an uninhibited state of being)" (Scheler 2009, p. 62). The will and the ability to inhibit biological needs, drives, and instincts to such an extent that they deviate far from their 'default state' set by nature are manifested in all types of abstinence, from food dieting up to the severe monastic vow. On the other hand, the voluntary un-inhibition of drives and instincts is expressed in an excessive hedonism not envisaged by nature, be it sexual, food- or goods-consuming, body-building, or any other type of obsession.

In the section on Dostoevsky, it was shown that self-will is ambiguous; it is neither good nor bad *per se,* insofar as everything depends on the stage of the person's development, who can act out of a stupid arbitrary caprice but also out of a deep religious belief and understanding of the nature of the real freedom.

What about Scheler? Is spirit only good, or is it also ambiguous, even bad and nasty (which is harder to imagine but should not be totally excluded)? The answer is nearly the same as for Dostoevsky: spirit is ambiguous (Weiss 1998).

Scheler writes that "man himself will shape that infinitely plastic segment of his nature which can be influenced directly or indirectly by the spirit and will. What comes from the spirit does not come automatically, nor does it come of itself. It must be guided!" A single person, as well as mankind in general, may end up as a saint or as a criminal, Scheler states (Scheler 1958, p. 101).

I devote the following sections of the article to the study of certain issues that are specific to Scheler proper and are not directly interconnected with Dostoevsky's ideas.

In "Sympathy…" Scheler explains that the free activity of spirit is hard to understand, although experimental and other psychologists strive for this understanding. The activity of spirit is "a whole region which lies entirely *beyond the comprehension* of empirical psychology (experimental or otherwise), and this by virtue of its *ontological* status. […] The (spiritual) person, as such, is intrinsically incapable of being *treated as an object*…" (Scheler 2011, p. 224).

> [P]ersonality and spirit represent something which is quite unlike the inorganic and organic fields in being intrinsically *beyond the bounds*

> *of spontaneous scrutiny,* since it is free to decide whether to make itself available and knowable or not. Persons, in fact, can be silent and keep their thoughts to themselves, and that is quite different from simply saying nothing. It is an active attitude, whereby they can themselves conceal their qualities from spontaneous scrutiny to any desired extent, yet without this necessarily involving any automatic expression or physical symptom to that effect. Nothing in Nature can 'hold its peace' in this way; which is why Nature, including happenings at the vital level of mentality, which always have a strictly unambiguous counterpart in physiological bodily processes, is open, in principle at least, to spontaneous scrutiny.
>
> Thus empirical psychology has only a very limited application to our problem (Scheler 2011, p.225).

The inaccessibility of spirit by experimental psychologists (i.e., its evasiveness), which is what the above passage is telling us, is really an interesting point of Scheler's thought. What Scheler is explaining is that spirit is able to make itself invisible if it wishes to and if it is in the favor of a person because of some grounds. This a very special and practical ability and a special cunning. Simply said, spirit may help you play a fool if you do not wish to show that you are very clever. In this way, one can manipulate other people and hide one's mental abilities or knowledge until the time comes for a strike from your side.

In addition to spirit and the body, Scheler also introduces an entity of vital consciousness. Scheler needs to introduce the 'vital center' to get the multitude of life organs and functions be represented as a whole.

> *[I]ntermediate* region of human nature, which I have sharply distinguished from the spiritual personality and the physical body by calling it *vital consciousness* (as the cognitive counterpart, whether super- or sub-conscious, of the actual process of organic life), and the focus of which I have elsewhere referred to as the 'vital center'. It is that climatic region of the soul to which belong the energies of life and death, the passions, emotions, drives and instincts; (these are of three types: the instinctive appetites of hunger and thirst, the erotic life-instincts and their derivatives, and the instinctive desire for power, dominance, increase and reputation). It is impulses such as these which may lead, in their conscious manifestations, to the sense of unity and to identification proper. (Scheler 2011, p. 34 -35).

If life on Earth is united, having, supposedly, one single cell as an ancient predecessor, why should the spirits of any individual men not also be connected in a unit in this manner? It would be symmetric in this respect. However, Scheler stands for the independence of every single spirit. This is a contradiction for Scheler, and one with which he tries to cope (Crosby 1998):

> [I]t is precisely the realm of spiritual actuality that is articulated as strictly personal, substantive, and intrinsically individual, right up to God, the Person of persons. We therefore count it the gravest of metaphysical

errors in any theory, from that of Averroes onwards, that it should seek to construe persons, i.e. concrete centers of spiritual activity, as 'modes' or 'functions' of a universal spirit; whether this be an absolute unconscious spirit (von Hartmann), a transcendental absolute consciousness (Husserl), or a transcendental reason (Fichte, Hegel's pantheism of Reason) (Scheler 2011, p. 75).

Scheler proposes to make a distinction: life is centered in any organism and united, whereas spirit is centered in any personality but is not united; spirits remain individual.

> Only by taking this view does it become possible, and necessary, to postulate an essential difference in the one-many relationships of personal centers and vital agencies respectively. For if they were identical in substance (as is held by Thomist scholasticism), we should simply have a dilemma: either we may postulate that all vital entelechies are ultimately one, in which case the spirit in each person is also, in reality, one and the same; or else there are just as many independent vital-centers as there undoubtedly are independently existing spirits. If, on the other hand, the connection between spirit and life is merely dynamic, it might also be the case that, although individual spirits were personal substances, life (in a sense still to be ascertained) might be metaphysically one and the same in all persons – though exerting itself dynamically in many different ways (Scheler 2011, p. 75-76).

The recently studied and published fragments from Scheler's heritage present the extremely complicated picture of how Scheler tried to solve the problem of the junction or disjunction of spirits. I cite two of those fragments, showing Scheler's very personal products of thinking, which were not finished or prepared for official publication. The fragments are presented first in German and then are given in my own translation into English.

"4. Der Geist ist keine Art von "Eigenschaft" oder Faehigkeit des Menschen. Er "hat" ihn nicht; er wird *von ihm "gehabt*". Der Mensch ist der Ort, wo der Geist (Gottes) aufleuchtet: Einbruch des Geistes in das Leben…" (Fragment XXVIII, 1925, p. 194).

4. The spirit is not a type of "quality" or ability of man. Man does not "possess" spirit; it is spirit that "possesses" man. Man is the place where the spirit (God's) brings itself to light: breaking spirit into life… [Translation from German into English by the author of this article – A.A.]

My comment is that this passage from 1925 is highly perplexing and deviates far from that which Scheler published publicly in "Cosmos…". First, the passage means that Scheler treated spirit much more closely to God, being actually God's product or quality, and second, that spirit, in his eyes, is prior to man."

1. Die Einheit des absoluten Geistes *Des Ens a se* schliest die Annahme des "*Gruppengeistes*" aus…

2. Das Miteinander in differenzierter Kundgabe mit Intelligenz und Wahl ist die Bediengung nicht fuer Ursprung *eines* Geistes in *allem*, sondern des absoluten Geistes in "jedem"… Die Ganzheit ist ehe im Einzelnen… eher der Einzelne im Ganzen ist". (Fragment LVIII, 1926/1927, p. 326).

1. The unity of the absolute spirit *Ens a se* excludes the acceptation of a *group spirit*…

2. Coherence and cooperation in the differentiated demonstration of intelligence and choice is the condition not for the appearance of one and the same spirit in all but rather of an absolute spirit in "everyone"… The totality is present in a single man… rather than a single man being present in the totality. [Translation from German into English by the author of this article – A.A.]

The second fragment, from 1926/1927, should be followed by an explanation. The matter is that Scheler contended against the understanding of spirit as a group spirit, which supposedly unites some limited political, national or religious group into one "mental body" or one super-individual social or intellectual formation. However, this denial of a group spirit is replaced instead by affirmation of the existence of an absolute spirit. The problem here is that in "Sympathy…", any mentioning of the absolute spirit (that is, the universal and all-uniting spirit) has been sharply criticized. The question, then, remains: what is Scheler's real conviction? It remains uncertain.

Conclusions

1. My task was to show that the two thinkers: Dostoevsky and Scheler, demonstrated the existence of a mental entity that is prone and able to overcome and do away with rationality, in the case of Dostoevsky, and biological instincts, in the case of Scheler. In other words, for Dostoevsky and Scheler, plain rationality and instincts do not rule the human world.
2. This mental entity is called self-will by Dostoevsky and spirit by Scheler.
3. Self-will and spirit are inherently ambiguous. They have at least two levels: the lower and the higher. The lower level is freedom of will and action in the form of an arbitrary caprice, whereas the higher level is freedom of self-sacrifice and altruistic, reasonable behavior.
4. The lower level arbitrariness is mostly atheistic or merely "mindless", whereas the higher level freedom is based on religious belief.
5. The higher level self-will and spirit are not embedded in the world; they transcend the world and are grounded in the Deity.
6. For Dostoevsky, self-will is an individual mental entity, although supported by religious faith in the person of Christ. For Scheler, the situation is more complicated. He never did finally make up his mind with respect to the nature of spirit. On the one hand, he calls it an error to treat spirit in a sense of the absolute or universal spirit, of which parts or representations are individual spirits, like Brahman-atman relations. On the other hand, in some passages, he prefers to speak of the absolute spirit to whom man with his individual spirit belongs.

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Searching for the Gift in T.S. Eliot´s Ash-Wednesday

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1. Eliot and preexisting concepts on religion and literature.

Throughout this essay we would like to propose a reading of T. S. Eliot´s Ash-Wednesday. This reading intends to show the mythic structure of the poem in relation to the exploration of the religious consequences of knowledge and poetic creation. What is going to be exposed in our analysis, has no intention whatsoever of being an absolute theory about the poem or its possible readings. It is just an attempt to enlighten a mystic point of view; concept not unfamiliar to Eliot. There are, no doubt, many other poetic elements that will not be taken into consideration by this essay. This is a set of intuitions, it is a memory of the Gospels, a memory of Heidegger, where the word is verb, and as verb it is creation; it is also a memory of Dante and of romantic and pastoral poems.

Our interpretation diverges from the claims of some of the authors that will be mentioned since we attempt to include the significance of the title into the poem's analysis, which in other works is reduced to a mere explanation of the religious festivity that the term denotes. This innovation is perhaps acceptable considering that it attempts to incorporate additional interpretative elements which, as in the title´s case, would justify this line of interpretation since the notions of sin, punishment and possible absolution are consolidated in it. Elements that we believe are essential to that day in which we are reminded of our own mortality and of the Fall of man in the purgation of Lent, which eventually concludes with the resurrection of Christ after He has defeated sin and death, and Grace is retrieved to mankind.

In regards to religion, and contrary to his approach in other Christian poems like Family Reunion, Eliot presents the audience with the intricacies, contradictions and symbolism inherent to Christian liturgy and dogma (Leavis 1962: 111). Further proof of Eliot's development of religious themes and motives, as well as his own views and approach to this subject in relation to culture, literature and tradition can be thoroughly found especially in the author's late poetry, and on his numerous essays and books in which, according to Kearns, he struggled continuously with "*words and meaning*", trying to reconcile opposite elements like "*knowledge and experience, dogma and literature, orthodoxy and feeling, scepticism and belief"* of which he did not found a satisfactory explanation either for himself or for his readers (1994: 80). In this view scepticism and belief are of greater significance since Eliot strove to unify both in the cultivation of spirituality through rational inquiry (Kearns 1994: 90), moving from *"two or more discordant viewpoints to a higher which shall somehow include and transmute them."* (Eliot 1964: 147-148). But of particular interest to the proposal here developed is Kearns asseveration that the poet completely believed

> Not only in hell and damnation but in the more salvific doctrines, in what he called the "*fact of incarnation*" and the atonement in what he took to be their corollary, the virgin birth. He also believed […] in the efficacy of prayer, the intercession of the Virgin and the communion of the saints (Eliot 1950 and Akroyd 1984 cited in 1994: 89)

Damnation is seen in Eliot's mind as a source of relief and a form of salvation, adding significance to *"the ennui of modern life"* (Eliot 1951: 427). Such doctrines, however, cannot account for the whole framework of the author's work, especially considering his praise of authors like Dante who *"could draw imaginatively on a wide range of fully formulated doctrinal and ethical traditions in their work"* (Kearns 1994: 79) when compared with other such as Blake and Milton whose production is more limited by their *"sectarian allegiances",* in reference to Eliot's claims that the ritual or religious myth cannot be completely explored or accounted, as the experiences of the believer and of the outsider are equally limited (Kearns 1994: 85).

Eliot's production is based on allusions and literary references (Longenbach 1994: 176), building his aesthetics upon the pillars of western culture, exemplified by the two opposed streams of thought […] one that includes Plato, Kant, Hegel (via Caird and Bradley), Bradley himself […]; the other comprising Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas […] (Habib 1999: 161). Dante's influence in Eliot spread beyond aesthetic creation, since he saw in the Italian "*the gift of incarnation",* towards which he aimed but struggled, *"as the recipient of the blessings of Christian faith and as the donor in turn of an articulation of these as immediate as the odour of a rose."* (Kearns 1994: 89-90), a figure that understood and taught him the relationship between *"sexual idealization, collapse of that idealization and the re-establishment of Eros only as mediated by realities beyond death"* (Kearns 1994: 90); as Ellis quotes from Eliot, one in whose work we find the value of renunciation, which persist beyond the grave (1983: 213). Like in the work of its Italian counterpart, allegory enables Eliot and his poetical voice to escape from their sense of self and be able to reach "*a common, external order*" where the burden of solipsism present on his early work can be overcame. (Ellis 1983: 215)

One of the points of departure of our stance from the usual critical approach to the poem is the identity of the different female characters of the poem, since to Kwan-Terry "*the blessèd face*" and "*the voice*" of the "*Lady*" represent the equivalent "*worldly woman*" of Eliot's life (1994: 135), interpretation also shared by other scholars such as Martz, who regards the poet's dedicatory of the poem to his wife as an echo of

the role performed by Dante's Beatrice and Cavalcanti's lady in the production of both poets (1998: 150); or Daümer's approach that conceives the work and its female characters as the struggle to understand and explore motherhood in relation to Eliot's own mother (1998: 480). Perhaps the uncertainty regarding the identity behind each female figure may spring from the ambivalence of the poet's and speaker's attitude, confusing sensual and divine love in their mysticism, similar to the themes and attitudes explored in Gerontion and other poems (Childs, 1997: 84), and influenced by Dante (Ellis 1983: 211). Our interpretation, as we have claimed, though differs from that of the authors mentioned still echoes some of the elements that conform the framework of their analyses. In her exploration of the Italian sources of the poem, Martz sees in the "*gift*" and the reference to Shakespeare both the gift of "*poetical creation"* and *"religious grace"* (1998: 150), likewise in Kwan Terry's approach to the poem as an ongoing process of verification of a metaphysical truth that *"involves an interpretation, a transmigration from one world to another, and such pilgrimage involves an act of faith"* (Eliot 1964: 163), we agree with his perspective of the poem as the individual's struggle to reach the Absolute, one who is prepared and determined to be dissolved into it through a *"mystical death"* (1994, 133: 136) but is constrained by *"the world of timebound phenomena"* that *"offers no significance because it separates one moment from another, rendering everything relative"* from which he cannot escape but in the reasoning and repetition of the historical moment when the eternal and the temporal are connected (1994: 132, 139), which in our view renders the poem as a metafictional and self-referential reasoning process. Knowing that some of the ideas we intend to develop have been found to a certain extent by the authors here acknowledged we feel that our premise is sound enough to go beyond what has been claimed so far by expanding them with different approaches that we find valuable to our analysis and to the understanding of the poem itself.

The proposed alternative reading intends to consider Ash-Wednesday as a metapoem about the poetic voice and how poetic creation is effected by the means of the word, here regarded in its mythical dimension and placed at the same level as the Word that created the world. Under this view, the quest of the poet and of the poetic voice is one of recovery, not only of the word as the element of creation but also of the reconstitution of *"old symbols, reclaiming them, redeeming them, setting them in context which will force us once again to confront their Christian meanings."* (Brooks 1963: 72-73). An aim that is intrinsic to Eliot's approach to poetry and criticism, and that is reminiscent of Jung's *"fantasy activity"*, as Gould explains, a process of recovering the *"religious significance to an event"* in which we are lead from *"an empirical reality"* to the world of the unconscious that controls the meaning of every act and interpretation that each individual performs (1981: 16). This process, he quotes is *"mythic"* and *"dialectical"*, claiming that it constitutes *"an enticing version of the phenomenology of mythical thinking"* that attempts

> To make a link between theology and what Kenneth Burke has called logology: between mythos and logos, mythology and literature. Jung´s belief that he has joined heaven and earth, the unconscious and

> the conscious, in the archetype is indeed what literary studies have found most interesting about his approach. (Gould 1981: 16)

After reading Ash-Wednesday, the first global intuition took us right away to the first verses of Genesis that talk about the Word of Creation, and to the first chapter of the Gospel according to John which more explicitly reads:

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.
4. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.
11. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (*King James Bible*, John 1)

When we are confronted by the reading of the poem, we hear at least two voices. The first one, the poet's, tells the reader about the Fall, a tale of despair, loneliness and misery in a time-bound world separated from God's Grace and where mankind's inheritance is lost; eventually eased as the pastoral reverie of the third and four sections takes over the narration, endowing it with a sense of hope that tries to blossom from the barrenness of the first two parts. However, as the story is driven to an expected redemptive climax, in his argumentation the poet is reminded of the irreparability of the Original Sin that puts an end to his aspirations, which is why the poem ends with a prayer, a prayer of despair and acknowledgment of the loss. The fall of the poet, nevertheless, is redeemable or at least he thinks and hopes so thanks to the existence of the second voice in the poem, which represents his role as a speaker, as a creator, as the one that carries the voice. In his penitence the poet praises and evokes God in the different actions of the poetic word and of the Word of Creation.

God as the maker of the Word, and the Word itself:

> *Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,*
> *The Word without a word, the Word within*
> *The world and for the world;*
> *And the light shone in darkness and*
> *Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled*
> *About the centre of the silent Word.* (v. 152-157).

God as the giver of the gift: *Desiring this man´s gift and that man´s scope.* (v. 4).

God as the listener:

> *Lord, I am not worthy*
> *Lord I am not worthy*
> *but speak the word only.* (v. 117-119)

God as Grace and Life:

> *Where shall the word be found, where will the word*
> *Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence [...]*
> *No place of grace for those who avoid the face*
> *No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and*
> *deny the voice.* (v. 159-160, 166-167).

This voice finds support on the image of Mary as a matrix of possibilities in which the Word is incubated, bringing redemption for the world.

Redeem
The time, redeem [...]
The silent sister veiled in white and blue [...]
But spoke no word,
Speech without word and
Word of no speech
Grace to the mother
For the Garden
Where all love ends. (v. 84-88, 137-138, 141, 143).

The poet is then, asking for that word, the voice and language he thinks men had before the apple was bitten. He wants to spit *"the withered seed"* (v. 183) in order to regain the Word, thus regaining the Kingdom, because he thinks his words are silent, that they are no longer able to create in the faithlessness of the modern world. This poet is, in a certain way, a modern Prometheus as he has stolen the secret of the heavens, and with that purloined voice he creates, becoming a poet. In a similar way Dante had to create an artifice that allowed him to tell what he saw in his metaphysical journey, because God wouldn´t have given him permission to do so, since He foreboded Saint Paul to tell what he saw there (cf. II Corinthians 12: 1-5), and prevented Lazarus from doing so as well. When Dante is getting closer to the pits of hell (cf. *Inferno* II), he doesn´t invoke the name of God as in every other chapter; he invokes his *ingegno*. That is, his ability to be an artist, a liar; that is why he suffers plenty when he reaches the pit where he finds Ulysses, since the Greek hero is in hell because of the gift that the pagan gods gave to him, precisely the *ingegno* (cf. *Inferno XXVI).* Eliot is doing the same thing, or at least wishes to do so; the poet is the trespasser of those boundaries, and falls because he knows the Word that creates.

It is impossible to talk about the Word of creation without considering that there might exist a relation with the principles of Jewish kabbalah.

> Todo el material aquí reunido gira en torno al tema de la ambigüedad del lenguaje: lenguaje creador de mundos –concretos e imaginarios-, moldeador de conciencias y artífice del hombre y las cosas, lenguaje bondadoso y sagrado al abrigo del vasto amparo de la naturaleza, pero también, lenguaje caído en la arbitrariedad del signo, víctima, pero a su vez cómplice del nombre y verdugo de la naturaleza, profano y permanentemente profanado por la sobrenominación indefinida, lenguaje malvado y pecador que, al venir a menos en boca del hombre, se rebaja a mero instrumento de comunicación y pierde con ello su aura originaria, el resplandor del nombre pleno antes de su trágica caída. En esta ambigüedad se inscribe la concepción mística de la Cábala. (Cohen 1999: 7).

Thus starts the introductory chapter of *Cábala y Deconstrucción*. The Kabbalah acknowledges the existence of an inherent problem in human language, a system

considered isolated from the true Word, but that is nonetheless necessary in the attempt to apprehend the sacred language. It is an imperfect and distortive mechanism based upon a defective tool, the sign and its arbitrariness, but it constitutes the only manner in which man may strive to reach illumination.

> El texto bíblico, cuya exégesis ocupa la vida toda del místico cabalista no es, aunque lo parezca, un monumento frío y estático que exija alabanza y ciego reconocimiento, sino un territorio que al ser explorado ciertamente se profana, que incluso solicita de su lector un mínimo de irreverencia para romper con su lenguaje como mero instrumento de comunicación. (Cohen 1999: 7).

Accordingly, the poem at hand receives the same attributes and characteristics that the Sacred Text but devoid of all its sacredness. By adopting the procedure through which the Kabbalah's ambiguity may be understood, we comprehend that if through the imperfect tools of the mechanism of human language the object of the sacred search cannot be reached, then it does not matter that the revelation is not an absolute Truth, even though the poetic voice intends it to be.

> La experiencia entonces frente a ese lenguaje huidizo y tramposo, «caído», diría Benjamin, define la postura, la inclinación hacia la escritura. Una escritura que comparte la ambivalencia del lenguaje es una irresistible celada que atrae justamente por su propio carácter inasible, atrapa en su fuga y se ausenta dejando al lector anclado en la densidad de su propio espacio […] La búsqueda es entonces el incansable rodeo, la permanente aproximación siempre diferida que conduce de nombre en nombre a un callejón sin salida […] En esta tensión irreductible se juega la «verdad» en la hermenéutica de la Cábala, donde toda palabra adquiere significación y realidad en la medida en que participa de este gran nombre: nombre de Dios. (Cohen 1999: 8).

Language is purely symbolic. Therefore Creation stands as a metaphor of the process that generates it. The impressiveness of this conception of the universe resides in its reduction of the sensuous world to mere language processes. The main concern of the Kabbalah is not so much the search of the origin of all things, or the Name of the Absolute One but rather its changes and movements, the manner in which it creates said name. If everything that man knows is seen as an expression of the process of creation, then the universe and language itself can be understood as parts of the enigma of the Name.

> Esto quiere decir que cada cosa, más allá de su propio significado, tiene algo más, algo que es parte de lo que brilla dentro de ella o, en una forma indirecta, de lo que dejó su marca en ella para siempre. El libro Yetzirah todavía está muy lejos de esta interpretación y, sin embargo, para los cabalistas, las Sefirot y las letras por las que se explica la palabra de Dios, eran simplemente dos métodos diferentes en los que la misma realidad podía estar representada en una forma simbólica. […] Para los cabalistas

esto no es más que una cuestión de elección entre estructuras simbólicas que están en sí mismas igualmente organizadas: el simbolismo de la luz y el simbolismo del lenguaje.

Por lo tanto, el movimiento en que la Creación se realiza puede interpretarse y explicarse como un movimiento lingüístico. Todas las observaciones y aseveraciones de los cabalistas alrededor de este tema se basan en esta tesis. Por supuesto que en la mayoría de los escritos cabalísticos, la doctrina de la emanación y el simbolismo de la luz estrechamente vinculado a ella, se entrelazan con el misticismo del lenguaje y la interpretación simbólica de las letras como los signos ocultos y secretos de lo divino en todas las esferas y etapas por las que atraviesa el proceso de la Creación. (Scholem 1999: 18).

2. The Purloined Voice.

The doctrine of Platonic archetypes contends that the external world is nothing but an imperfect copy of the World of Ideas. In one of his late works, *Parmenides*, Plato already sensed a possible objection towards such theory. Said objection makes the arguments about ideas inconsistent or places them into an *ad infinitum* regression. Aristotle's turn of the argument is, perhaps, more interesting to the theme here developed; the Third Man´s argument contemplates the separation of things from their own archetype to the point that the latter is rendered unnecessary or unrecognizable. It points to the lack of necessity of archetypes since they either do not exist or exist so remotely that they cannot affect man or his knowledge. Both options, which in the end come to the same, lead to their own invalidity since on the first the chain of degradation through millennia prevents the recognition and relation of a present human with that primeval Adam, his archetype; and on the second the connection between an object and its Ideal is based on similarity, which prompts the necessity of a midpoint of similarity (A) between said object and its archetype, as well as another midpoint (B) between the previous one (A) and the object, creating an infinite chain that has to be replicated for all instances and categories of every entity, in which the lines of separation between each object and its archetype have not passed yet that midpoint. (There is a reminiscence of Zeno, who put forward the impossibility of movement). The archetype then becomes unreachable and useless, ceasing to exist.

A second reading of the poem under this perspective evinces a flaw on the neoplatonic Kabbalah in which the poetic voice seems to belief. One of the definitions of Supreme Being, rejected by Aquinas is the premise of the ontological argument described by Saint Anselm in the *Proslogion* in which God is regarded as something beyond inconceivability. If there is, in fact, an archetypical word that accounts for Ideas, then the Word turns into the archetype of the archetype, and once again the argument of the infinite chain of regression returns, reaching the aforementioned conclusion. The Kabbalah as we have argued not only seeks God's language but His Name, the Verb in which God is encoded. If He is encoded then He is conditioned; if

omnipotence can be enclosed into something then it means that it is second to something of greater power. According to this perspective God is neither greater than the name that contains Him nor Omnipotence is omnipotent. If the Name is God's archetype, then God Himself is subordinated to the objection proposed in the Third Man's argument, separating Him from His Idea so He would be a degraded copy of it, and thus he would not be God, but a lesser version of the archetype. The World of Ideas therefore, stops being perfect, as Forms are just copies of their archetypes, that is, words; if we consider that the link between man and Truth is effected by the remembrance of the soul's visit to the World of Ideas then mankind cannot have the remotest idea of what is true as a result of that counterfeit. Similarly there cannot exist a word that encodes God, since the name would be God Himself, and in that process that name would become superior to God, which is, in itself, a contradiction. Thus, Christian tradition would have to include in the mystery of the Trinity this fourth attribute of the Supreme Being, which entails facing the failure already experienced by cabbalists, as no man can be greater than God.

On this situation of questioning and doubt we find the speaker, a person that is aware of how the power of the word of creation has waned as a result of the process already described, and ventures even to question the significance that this loss has upon him (v.7-8). The voice's individuality is emphasized in the preceding verses in his acknowledgement of the futility of his endeavour to master and recover the full capacities of the Word of creation, God's offering to Adam (v. 4-5). As a result of the impossibility of said endeavour the speaker in his despondency, in the reference to Cavalcanti's verses affirms to have no option but to move forward (v. 1-3), introducing the themes of renunciation (Kwan-Terry 1994: 134), and of exile (Ellis 1983: 214); but these verses of affirmation also replicate the movement of the polymorphous beings that draw God's chariot as described in Ezekiel, from whose imagery and verses the voice relies on to contrive several of the poem's conceits that will be addressed presently. These creatures are, moreover, characterised by blending together the body and the semblance of different animals and, among them, stands that of the eagle and man (Ezekiel 1: 5-12). The synthesis of both figures prompts us to suggest that the poetic voice aims to identify his own self with the eagle (v. 6), as an experienced being exhausted and impaired since its form of interaction with the world is constrained, from which the reader can establish a link between the eagle's burdened and contracted wings and the ineffectual words of the poetic voice, an intellectual self that feels lost his means of connecting with reality or of creating his own (v. 6).

In the subsequent stanza he continues his justification focusing this time on the mutability that has characterised the word as a consequence of time and the actions of mankind, in reference to the chain of degradation already explained. If we establish God's Word of Creation as the original, the gift entrusted to Adam would be a demeaned version of the same, therefore, by the effect of the *"positive hour"* the capacities of the word inherited by humanity are and would be diminished until its eventual complete loss of value (v. 10). An irreversible process that the poetic voice

establishes as a counterpart to the loss of both Paradise, and the Promised Land *"a land flowing with milk and honey"* (Exodus 33:3), the product and testimony of the word of creation's power, barred from human reach (v. 15). From the articulation of the thoughts that are tormenting him, we maintain, the poetic voice is gaining the confidence needed to prepare an act of defiance by the realization of the hopelessness of recovering the full creative capacities of the word expressed through his discontent and vindication.

The poetic voice's last argument resumes his assertion about the nature of time, addressing specifically its fleetingness and the notion of *"finitude"* and *"situatedness"* (Shusterman 1994: 42) that precludes the existence and realization of Ideals (v.16-19), reminiscent of Kwan-Terry's stance (1994: 135) but related, in our view, to the speaker's understanding that God's gift was and could only be valid in Eden, the place and time for which it was meant. And just as this last utterance is pronounced, the assurance and despondency of the voice reaches a *crescendo*, being absolutely convinced that the words he is about to utter are of no consequence as there is nothing to lose as a result of the intoxicating and apparent freedom ensued by despair, and by prevailing over the fear of losing what he most desires. In his arrogance he claims to *"rejoice"* over the state of things, a demonstration of the voice's hubris in which he carelessly commits the mortal sin of pride (v. 20); a declaration that precedes the climax of his tantrum: *"I renounce the blessed face/ And renounce the voice"* (v. 21-22), a statement between heresy and apostasy, perpetrating the eternal sin of forswearing God, His Flesh, and the Holy Spirit (Mathew 12: 31); reasserting his acts once more by revelling in his recently acquired liberty to establish his own beliefs through the construction of the voice's statement, in what we deemed represents a self-referential line (v.24-25).

But the moment after he has finished this act of bravado he quails, repenting and asking in prayer for God's mercy and pardon for a sin he knows is unforgivable, praying as well to relinquish the distrust and scepticism with which he has been assailing his own belief in the Catholic dogma (v. 26-28). It is noteworthy that in addition to this sudden burst of regret he partially resigns the individuality that has used for the whole vindication to adopt the plural, hiding his mistake behind the collective of humanity in which he hopes to be able to dilute his lack of faith (v. 26, 33, 38-41). But the poetic voice is not so naïve so as to expect that this demonstration of humility would be enough, he is aware of the repercussions of his insolence as the abjuration of Christ and the Holy Spirit would render him incapable of asking for the redemption that according to the Christian belief Christ has obtained for mankind; the Holy Spirit being both the messenger and message of His existence; and as the fear of the impossibility of absolution seizes the speaker's mind, he resorts with yet another self-referential line in which he attempts to justify his actions by arguing that if his words no longer have its complete potential of creation then they should not serve to condemn him either (v. 31); followed by what we understand does not only address his heresy but serves as a reference to Adam and the Fall, as the voice pleads in his prayer that such an event would never happen again, implying also the consequent and

further degradation of the word that would represent the complete destruction of the poetic voice and his form of communication in ultimate instance (v. 32-33).

As opposed to the first stanzas that developed the poetic voice's increasing frustration, we now find a voice who is gradually winding down, though still justifying his actions in the deterioration of the word, this time supported by the development of the already discussed metaphor of the aged eagle (v. 6) into now a full-fledged conceit, which consequently induces us to regard the image of the air in the succeeding verse as a reference to the surroundings in which those utterances occur, which according to the voice are now *"small and dry"* in contrast to the freshness of the springs and limitless verdure that he associates with Paradise and the Promised Land (v. 34-36). Now that he has resumed his defence he directs his final petition to God, asking that through his guidance he may be able to strike a balance between being actively engaged in the perusal and discussion of the dogma while at the same time not being troubled by the deviant conclusions that may arise from it, and in ultimate instance to remain calm and not to act rashly when this thoughts lead him to challenge God's authority (v.38-39). On the last pair of verses the poetic voice changes his object of adoration from God to the Virgin, praying for her intervention by reciting and repeating the last verse of the Hail Mary prayer, with the remarkable exception of forgetting the word *"sinners"* in the repetition of the verse, whether unconsciously or on purpose[1], from which we are led to presume that the poetic voice is reciting them before going to bed as the habit accustoms to do.

3. The sleep of the just

We believe that by assuming that the poetic voice falls asleep and the experiences expressed are part of his dreams the reader may comprehend to a greater extent the intricacies and implications that the metaphorical language and images bring to the text, a view inferred from the impressionistic nature and the vagueness that characterises the imagery of the successive sections, as well as by the shift in the verbal tense and the use of language resulting from the apparent confusion that takes hold over the poetic voice's frantic utterances. The subsequent interpretation, we admit, is ambiguous in that however exhaustive and profound the analysis of dreams may be its inaccuracy should be taken into account as a result of the distortion that operates between the images represented on the surface and their ambivalent meaning. The existence of different levels of consciousness in dreams has been acknowledged and thoroughly explored by the school of Psychoanalysis since the publication of Sigmund Freud's seminal work on dream analysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which he postulated the existence of two modes of expression in dreams: the *"dream-thought"* or the dream's subconscious essence and the *"dream-content"* its translation to consciousness that conforms the imagery presented (1913, 93). In his work he signalled the principal mechanisms and processes that intervene in that translation, carried out principally through condensation and displacement that are driven by repressive forces with the purpose of disguising the object of the dream-thought. The resulting rendition he argued is somewhat lacking of the representation of logical

relations between dream-thoughts, as dreams can only depict them by using several mechanisms based on the relationships between images like uniformity that encloses relations of similarity and opposition, simultaneity, succession, and inversion (Freud 1913: 103-105). In regards to succession Freud did not only refer to the succession of pictures that constitute a dream but to the sequence of different dreams on the same night as well, a relation that should not be overlooked as it can betray the subjacent implications that each episode shares with its counterparts (Freud 1913: 109); a claim that was also shared by some of his contemporaries like Otto Rank or Scherner, who ventured as well to assert that the latter sections help the interpretation of the preceding parts where the object is vaguely depicted *"when the graphic impulse becomes exhausted"* (Scherner 1861 cited in Freud 1913: 110). Accordingly we allege that the subsequent sections of the poem, notwithstanding their being parts of the same dream or constituting different episodes, have been experienced on the same night, Ash-Wednesday's night precisely since in its recollection of mortality, binding together the individual with the rest of the fold, the penitent stands in preparation for purgation, a departure from the sins of the old life into the purity of the new, regarded as a process of death and rebirth.

In fact, this is the only possible moment in which the poetic voice can dare to proclaim his irritated renunciation; if he believes in the effectiveness of the Catholic dogma, which states that after Lent, come Easter Sunday, all our sins would be forgiven; he has forty days to atone. His doubt comes from two different ways: if either his sins are unredeemable, or the dogma is worthless, he is condemned. Altogether this oneiric sequence represents the symbolic death of the poetic voice, who sets out on a journey through different levels of consciousness and the realms envisioned within them to gain the absolution for the unforgivable sin he has committed by resorting to any symbol or element associated with redemption that his literary and religious knowledge may recall, but especially clinging to the last hope that the Catholic dogma offers to him in the form of the death and resurrection of the Redeemer, mimicked by the poetic self's loss of identity.

In order to ascertain what elements constitute the core of the dream's significance Freud identified the intensity and recurrence of an image's representation as the factors that are revealing to the interpreter, since the elements of dream-thoughts that are subjected to their emphasis are rarely present in the dream-content, and if depicted they have been subjected to the most profuse work of condensation or displacement, which marks their value to the censorship (Freud 1913: 108). In that regard we focus our attention especially on the first two images, the Lady and the leopards, as they have underwent an extensive process of condensation. In the case of the latter they have experienced an identification, a form of condensation in which only one of the members of a group connected by a common feature is represented (Freud 1913: 105), as they spring from a metareference from Dante's *Inferno* (I, 30-50) to Jeremiah (5:6) in which the beasts represent annihilation for those who refuse to repent from their sins, which could be the reason behind their condensation within the poet's psyche. They

also echo figures of classical literature and mythology, as a reference to Cerberus or, as Pinkney has claimed, to the panthers of Circe's Palace (1984: 27). Although we differ from Martz's understanding of the leopards as a symbol of God's grace, we accept her rendition of the juniper tree and its context as a reference to Elijah that underlines the motif of renewal (Kings 19:1-8), and to the fall of man (1998: 152) and its implications regarding the loss of the Word. As prophesied in the source text these creatures exert the destruction of the poetic voice's physical corrupted body, symbolising the depersonalization disorder and self-estrangement from his own identity that the voice is experiencing on this section, represented as well by the detachment that characterises the narration. It may be argued that the *"Lady"* is overtly distinguished from the Virgin by the poetic voice, but her figure as well as other variations (v. 84, 141, 168, 209) in truth refer to the same entity, Mary, a "*collective image*" that has been formed by condensation, as its presence in the *"dream-content"* serves to join the greatest number of *"dream-thoughts"* increasing the number of associations and meanings that each of these elements produce in the dream-material (Freud 1913: 97, 105), one into which other female figures like Dante's Beatrice have been added (Ellis 1983: 215). This perspective is reinforced by taking into consideration that the poetic's voice last thoughts were the verses of the Hail Mary (v. 40-41), and his concern with unification. In addition to amplifying the indefiniteness of the poem's imagery and the multiplicity of its associations, this process can also result from the poetic's voice censorship, as though asleep, he is still aware of the problems that the Virgin's intercession implicates in the Catholic dogma. The aim of the voice's invocation to Mary is rather straightforward as he intends her to intercede for his sins, cleansing the stain of his defiance by her "*loveliness*" (v. 50-53). However, this would entail a dogmatic issue inherent to Catholicism, and ultimately the sin of idolatry, as the intervention of the Virgin and the saints is differently regarded in the Roman Catholic and the Protestant doctrine, since the latter's closer reading of the Bible disregards the worship of any figure other than God and Christ. It is this sin that brings forth the remembrance and re-enactment of Ezekiel's episode of the Valley of Bones (37:1-14) since idolatry brings the Israelites' fall and punishment (6:1-8, 44:12) causing their demise and the death of the valley's life. But the episode's reference despite carrying these implications it also entails the promise of rebirth through redemption, as in Ezekiel's vision God offers them their last chance of redemption, resurrecting the fallen Israelites and producing the Valley's regrowth (Ezekiel 36: 25-27, 35; 37:12).

Afterwards the poetic voice recalls his identity, aware of his concealment in the dissociation he is experiencing, and realising the futility of his actions and words in an existence outside of Paradise, in juxtaposition with the image of the barrenness of the desert (v. 51-54). The symbol of the gourd in Western artistic tradition, as Wilson asserts, is closely linked to the prophet Jonah as a symbol of resurrection (1951: 152), representing the antidote for the Apple (Haig 1913: 260); element that serves as the vessel in which the remains of the poetic voice are collected. The Lady's withdrawal is effected once the voice has consciously recognised the hopelessness of his plea and

endeavour, from which in despair he resigns and submits to forgetfulness and oblivion while his dissociated lifeless remains are left as a token of expiation (v.57-62). As a result God's voice is heard once more, encouraging the voice to continue the process by offering him the role of prophet alongside its implications of rebirth, (v. 62-64) another reference to Ezekiel in which endowed with God's and the wind's breath the prophet is able to restore the life of the dead (37: 9-14). The bone's song is introduced by an allusion to Ecclesiastes (12: 5) that reflects upon fear and the satiation of desire in death and eternity, motives also developed in the bones' litany that mirrors the structure of the Litany of Loreto, a Marian litany that praises the Virgin as an intercessor. But in the case of the bone's chant Mary departs from her previous role, undergoing a process of division into the Roman Catholic and the Protestant view explored through the antithetical arrangement of a series of concepts that refer either to the former or to the latter (v 67-72), which the dream has *"reduced to uniformity"* (Freud 1913: 105); being now regarded as a *"Mother"* (v. 86), the means by which salvation would come in the figure of Christ. Mary's motherhood is explored by the addition of the rose's symbol to the work of condensation, since roses are central to Christian Marian symbolism as she was considered the blossom that springs from Eve's thorny shrub in order to repair the sin of the first virgin, as Sedulius wrote in *Carmen Paschale* (II v. 20-49), a notion that Dante used in a similar fashion (*Paradiso* XXXII, 1-36). The transformation of the *"single Rose"* into the *"Garden"* (v.73-74) represents Christ's deliverance, as the poetic voice assigns to them the figures of the Virgin and Jesus respectively, drawn from Dante's similar attribution (*Paradiso* XXIII, 71-75). The garden's identification with Christ is likewise driven by the poetic voice's hopes and desires of regaining the state of Grace and original capacities of the word thanks to the Saviour; from which the voice starts his reflections upon desire as Jesus's infinite love would quell the pangs of unsatisfied love implying, as the poetic voice's realises, *"The greater torment"* of the satiation of love and desire, and thus of his longings (v. 74-79), which being established upon a platonic ideal, they would put an end to what by definition is *"unconclusible"*, that is, not liable to be proved or deducted as it cannot be determined or limited, which in turn would interrupt his unattainable quest, his fixation on the Word of Creation as a platonic archetype, and the process in which both are developed, the poem itself.

Despite the gratefulness dedicated to Mary for her son in the end of the bone's song there is a subjacent sense of frustration and defeat in the cynical satisfaction shown by the bones in the return to the initial setting where the tainted remains of the poet are left behind to be forgotten (Ezekiel 6: 5, 22: 15-16), after which influenced by the scene of the division of the land in Ezekiel's vision, the poetic voice is conflicted once more by the contradiction represented by unity and division. This concern goes beyond a mere opposition of terms as it involves a pondering about the elements required for the construction of a new argument that overrides the effectuation of the Third Man's argument. The only manner of obviating the infinite chain between the archetype and the entity is by removing the separation that exists between the two

from the beginning, since even a single grade of division is enough to separate them indefinitely. The solution is to fully identify the object with its archetype, resulting in the perspective that the objects perceived are the actual archetype, implying that humanity actually lives in the World of Ideas. This approach obviates the Theory of Forms since it renders them, like in the case of Aristotle's objection, unnecessary. If objects are the archetype they neither have an archetype nor are the archetype of other element, they are what they are, and thus the fault is on human perception that in its imperfection distorts the perfect reality of things, and regards them as variable. By adopting this view into the Christian context we can connect it to the proposal that maintains that we still live in Paradise, implying that the Fall consists in ignoring that fact; a perspective shared by the poetic voice, who in his cynical and pessimistic attitude obviates temporarily the solution of the problem and focuses rather on the current state of affairs, the ineffectuality of such questions in a world where we are perceptually separated from Grace as a consequence of the loss of the Word, which is also a part of mankind's lost inheritance.

The frustration and sense of loss that pervades the conclusion of the preceding sequence is gaining hold over the poetic voice's psyche throwing him into the abyss of his own oneiric domain, now nightmarish and grotesque, founded upon the metaphysical plane created by Dante in *Inferno*, structured in different levels highlighted in the poem by the motif of the staircase (Ellis 1983: 214), in resemblance as well to medieval sermons in which the Seven Deadly Sins are represented as *"seven ascending staircases"*, a demon lurking in each of them waiting *"to take the human spirit out of this world"* (Hosbaum 2003: 449). As Hosbaum argues the concept behind those sermons is *"one of suffering as well as purgation"* as in the journey of ascension the human spirit is gradually stripped from its corporeal attributes, a similar process to the one that the poetic voice underwent in the previous episode. As a result the speaker abandons his detached perspective and is forced to experience this section of the journey in the first person, which increases the sense of fear that taints the visions of the speaker's nightmare as the attributes of his context are constructed around the concept of sickness and decay (v. 99, 103, 105) that can be regarded as the physiological representation of sin. The context of the dank stair also echoes Jonah, a figure already explored by his experience of a process of defiance, punishment and restoration; who also served as the reference to prophesy Jesus' resurrection (Matthew 39: 41). Purgation is the central motif of the final verses, drawn from the Eucharistic prayer (v. 117-119), in which the Word of the Lord is not only regarded as a source of absolution but also of physical healing (Matthew 8: 5-8); but according to the speaker's addition it needs to be directly requested, and more importantly, pronounced by the Lord. Thus, the poetic voice conceives the transgression he has committed and its purgation on both metaphysical and physical terms, the former as a result of the denial of the Holy Spirit, and the latter in connection to the Original Sin, which entails the loss of Paradise and the Word as a direct consequence of the Apple's seed that allegedly has hindered the capacity to use God's language and human perception, explored in the speaker's final realization in the previous poem and developed in the subsequent sections.

The development of the motifs subjacent to the speaker's nightmare is briefly interrupted by the pastoral scene, a symbolist and elusive fragment that constitutes a dream-within-a dream that though apparently disrupts the continuity of the theme and imagery, it still responds to two reasons, namely, to the overall structure and implications of the poem, as well as to the drives and ambitions of the poetic voice. The central element that knits together the fragment's imagery is the notion of renewal, a reverie of sensuous cleansing, hinted by the window's bellied form, the blossom, and the idea of spring time; a concept also explored and perhaps with more significance in the symbolism of the three plants mentioned. The fig which in pagan classical tradition is connected to Priapus, represent in Christianity the leaves that Adam and Eve use to cover their nakedness after the Fall (Genesis 3: 7), in addition to Jesus' parable of the barren fig tree that explores the notion of repentance achieved thanks to forbearance and suffering (Luke 13: 6-9). The hawthorn stands as a symbol of duality, contradiction and the unification of opposites; representing fertility, chastity and decay, as well as the primal symbol of the May Day in folk tradition. The lilac besides its connotations of love, innocence and mourning is part of the myth of the Syringa and Priapus, in which the nymph being chased by the god turns into a lilac bush to avoid capture. Moreover the figure of the *"broadbacked"* piper acts the role of Pan as through displacement some of the deity's characteristics may have been assigned into it (Freud 1913: 101), creating a composite image that also includes the colours usually associated to the Virgin Mary. Although it may seem arbitrary and coincidental, we argue that the piper's amalgam and the reference to the myth previously mentioned points to the figures found in Keats' Ode on a Grecian Urn, which prompts us to regard the fragment as a self-referential reflection on artistic creation and the process of aesthetic reverie in relation to the attempt to achieve and represent ideals as part and purpose of the poetic voice's quest. The speaker's reverie as the Urn's is constructed upon and appeals to the internal reproduction and representation of the images presented within the creative mind of the artist-spectator (Vendler 1985: 116-118), as the soundless melody of the poetic voice's dream points to the *"ditties of no tone"* that the Urn's piper plays not to the senses but *"to the spirit"* (Keats v. 15), to the world of imagination; implying for him a loss of self in the autonomous otherness of the work of art (Vendler 1985: 125), which can be seen in the speaker's momentary renouncement of his ego that allows him to experience the external and fleeting sensations that conforms his vision until its eventual fading. In addition, the meta-dream under this perspective can be regarded as a *"representation of universal or archetypal Truths"* (Vendler 1985: 119), the endeavour to reach an eternal prototype in which thanks to the workings of the imagination, Austin argues, sensuous experiences are not just repeated but refined (1964, 435), sequestered in a permanent reality that transcends the boundaries of time where the poet is able to reconcile *"life in its ever changing fullness"*, suggested in the dream by the spring time and the Maypole, and the apprehension of those *"ripe moments"* within the permanent representation of the work of art (Wigod 1957: 116); a unifying and eternally recurrent experience that nonetheless has served the poetic

voice to dispose of the temporal dimension, a step required in the expression and exploration of ideals as he previously realised. (v.16-19) However, as in the case of Keats' poem the timeless vision of this *"Cold Pastoral"* is essentially an illusion, as *"its permanence is sustained by its artificiality"* (Biswas 1977/8: 107), inherent to the pastoral genre; abruptly ending as a consequence of *"the necessary and constant obliteration inherent in the aesthetic process itself"* (Vendler 1985: 125); but also springing from the realisation that the form of cleansing he seeks requires more than the creative devices and the framework which that sensuous realm of artistic creation provides and is founded upon, it needs the verbalised formula, the expression of yearning and unworthiness in the yielding of one's pride in plea or prayer.

Although the distraction of the reverie has faded the idyllic setting remains, providing the perfect context where renewal and refinement can be finally received in this oneiric Paradise that constitutes, as Kwan-Terry claims, *"the reminder of the natural world where Time exists and is not redeemed"* (1994: 137). Renewal is not only highlighted in the vision of Paradise, but in the reference to episodes of Dante's *Purgatorio* (XXV-XXXIII) that also serve as the framework upon which the fragment is built. In *Purgatorio* Dante meets the poet Arnaut Daniel who is *"preparing for holiness by being purged in the flames of his lust"* (Ellis 1983: 214), hinting at the already mentioned connection between the sensuous and the mystic experience (Ellis 1983: 210-211). As Eliot's translation tells us, the fires of Purgatory are different than the fires of Hell in that the torment is desired an accepted by the penitent, and in that suffering lies their hope (1951: 216-17), a self-appointed torment that as Booth expresses "*represents the possibility of moving from Purgatory to Paradise"* (2015: 235). In this context Daniel pronounces the *"sovegna vos"*, a token and a remembrance of his identity but also of his pain and his effort that in the poem call us back to the abandoned remains of the speaker (v. 89-90), and to his present situation. Instead of flames, the renewal of the speaker is attempted to be effected thanks to the restorative presence of nature, and especially by the redemptive qualities of the composite image of the Virgin Mary, now clad in her usual colours, white and blue (v. 124, 141), which prompts us to include the character of the *"silent sister"* into the work of condensation, who shows certain characteristic of Dante's Beatrice (Ellis 1983: 218) when the light envelops her (v. 135). Given the section's dominant motif of redemption and how the poetic voice identified this aim with the Virgin's motherhood and the birth of Christ, the light may stand as a metaphor for the Annunciation or for Christ's birth, a moment of solemnity as the funerary procession in which the *"old life"* is escorted in pomp but also, as Ellis remarks, in the *"dignity, order and significance"* that the images confer *"to the experience of sin and wastage"* (1983: 215). The poetic voice's expectations of rebirth seem to be on the verge of finding fulfilment at last in the departure of the hearse and the relocation of the scene into a reinterpretation of Eden where the composite Virgin is praying *"between the yews"* (v. 142), a reference to the Tree of Knowledge and to the Tree of Life; and is accompanied by the piper, addressed now in his form of deity and identified with Pan. A paradise where creation is performed by means of a silence

that also underlines the solemnity of the moment when the time-bound world stretches out to meet the eternal (v. 145), seen respectively in the fountain and the bird (Kwan-Terry 1994: 137). But, in the end, it results being a fruitless moment as the true Word (v. 119, 152), the word of Creation and of healing is neither heard or pronounced, leaving the speaker to hear *"the whispers of yew"* (Kwan-Terry 1994: 138) that point towards the Original Sin, as well as to the promises of the Tree of Life. Promises are also part of the *Salve Regina*, as the hymn can be regarded as a request for the Grace and absolution of Jesus as a product of Mary's womb, but in the poem's shortened form it underlines the sense of absence, and acceptance of the exile from a sort of Paradise that the poetic voice, like the rest of the exiled figures drawn from the Scriptures, has to experience (v. 148). A re-enactment of Genesis (3:23-24) that alongside the section, as a whole, emphasises the sense of loss that the poetic voice feels in regards to Paradise, in connection with the natural qualities of the Word of Creation (v. 148).

4. The awakening.

The fifth section shifts the focus on the Virgin towards God and Jesus referred to in their representation of the Word, as the speaker constructs a justification in which the Word even if it not pronounced or heard is still a Word in itself, a Word whose existence preceded that of the world, whose birth is represented by the reference to *John* (1:1-5) and, as Longenbach notes in regards to Gerontion, to Lancelot Andrewes' sermon on Matthew (1994: 177). A verb of creation that gives existence to the world and to itself, a meta-word that even if unreachable in the silence of isolation is still venerated as the centre of the world in the figure of Jesus, the Word made flesh. This process of reasoning highlights the increasing awareness of the poetic voice and his ascension to a state of consciousness, followed yet by another exposition in the reference to Miccah (6:1-5), in which God expostulates to the Israelites their idolatry and their sins, and the redemption he offered to their fathers, as Matthew Henry comments (2004: 846), reasoning with them by teaching them how to reason with themselves, aim that is sought as well by the speaker (v. 38-39, 211). The speaker continues by questioning the appropriateness of the Word to exist in a *"unstilled"* world that suffocates its capacities and value as a result of the noise seen as a degradation, as we have argued, of the capacities of language as God's gift; and the suitability of said gift to those who like the poet, now hidden once again behind the collective, walk in the darkness of an existence outside God's Grace that severs them from the rest of humanity, as even the sons and daughters of Adam can still be redeemed, an isolation that springs from the defiance that he committed, indicated by the self-referential lines (v. 165-167) that point to their counterparts in the first section (v. 18-22). These lines of reassertion and self-reproach are followed by a further questioning, this time regarding the capacity of the Virgin Mary to intercede for the sins of the faithful, not just in terms of volition but if metaphysically she would be able to mediate for the people that the poet brings forth, and among which he again hides himself in an entreating outcry (v. 168- 175). People who, like Judas, have chosen to belief but also have decided to oppose the one who created them and gave them the faith they had

adopted and even in heresy still follow; those who are divided between the different readings and understandings of the multiple dogmatic divisions regarding Christianity and Mary's figure (v. 170-171) as Ellis notes (1983: 218), but this lines may as well refer to the entrapment in the fulfilment of dreams as a reference to the *Odyssey*'s gates of horn and ivory (XIX, p. 271). Those regarded by the speaker as pitiable infants barred from Grace and the Promised Land, desiring it and unwilling to resign to it even when they are aware of the impossibility of such hope, as a result both of their renouncement to the *"face and the voice"* and the loss of the capacities of human language and the mastery of the word of creation (v. 168-174). The speaker resumes the speculative process by bringing on again the composite formations of the garden and the dessert already explored in his dreams, the former as a representation of the Garden of Eden where the condensed image of Mary is placed between the yews (v. 177), a reference to the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the latter as the refuge to the people that even when afraid are prone to question and challenge the dogma as well as God's impositions; ending in the acknowledgement of the desire of spitting the residue, the token of the Original Sin, the Apple's seed that is conceived as the responsible of obstructing the flow of breath, seen in Ezekiel and in the Valley of Bones' episode as the essence of life, which hinders the capacity of humans to communicate in the language of God, of using the Word of Creation (v. 182-183).

If a characteristic defines the final episode is its self-referential standpoint, recapitulating the different images and metaphors that the poetic voice has created in his dreams with the addition of new motives, but specially alluding the words that led to his heresy and brought his punishment on the previous night; endowing the metaphysical journey he has experienced with a sense of cyclicality, a full circle that leads him to the moment when he committed his mistake, granting him the opportunity of making amendments thanks to the new insight gained from his oneiric pilgrimage. The opening lines of the poem denote that change of the speaker's intentions and attitude as the modification of *"because"* for "*although"* indicates, according to Kwan-Terry, that the *"positive action"* and the *"affirmation"* that the former implied has been reduced to a weaker meaning, losing its former implication of choice to a stance that shows acceptance (1994, 138). In this manner a process of confession is started by the poetic voice, admitting his own hesitation in regards to what has been lost both as a consequence of the Original Sin and of his own defiance, juxtaposed with the knowledge that has resulted from them; followed by two self-referential lines that acknowledge the very context and essence of the poem, the day of Ash-Wednesday in its connection to the remembrance of Jesus' death and rebirth (v. 190); and finally the actual effectuation of catholic confession shown in the opening formula *"Bless me father"* (v. 191), but omitting the recognition of his state as a sinner, recalling his previous lapse when reciting the Hail Mary (v. 40-41), a substitution that responds to an attempt to make allowances for his heresy in a statement that integrates his desire to be absolved and the difficulty of desisting from the questions and incongruences that assail him (v. 38-39, 211). The perspective of the speaker is certainly hopeful in

respect to the prospects of his own case, as well as to the condition of the creative word that in the mind of the poetic voice undergoes a process of transformation by adapting itself to the maritime context upon which the section is based[2], and of renewal since the *"vans to beat the air"* (v. 35) have become *"unbroken"* sails (v. 193-194) that though forced to renounce to his own former glory in the skies are able to fulfill his function in this new, and less ambitious, medium. This renovation responds to the poetic voice's awareness of the creative word's remaining power that so far has enabled him to start and continue his quest in the development of the poem itself, a metaliterary approach that is continued in the reference to the *Odyssey's "gates of sawn ivory"* through which pass the dreams and words that cannot find fulfilment and are *"deceitful"* (XIX, p. 271), the speaker's acknowledgement that all the *"empty forms"* created that constitute his experience are just an illusion, similar to the case of the reverie as the creative process is based upon an artificial system, the degraded word (v. 201-203).

As the section develops the tone of admittance starts to evolve into one of yearning and request, preceded by his last assertion (v. 204-205) which represent a maturing of the conclusions about time that he had reached (v. 16-19), in that he is aware of the crucial instant and point in which he is established, the moment of preparation for death and rebirth that the celebration of Ash-Wednesday started, which will be continued throughout Lent (v. 205-206). This is followed by his first petition to the unified figure that on his dreams represented the Virgin Mary, in which even if we cannot know the position that each of Eden's trees represents in the statement we can be certain that it responds to the speaker's desire of unification, asking in the resolution of his case the inclusion of the connotations associated to both (v. 208-210). His prayer is continued by the reiteration of one of his first requests (v. 38-39), which leads to the formulation of his plea's ultimate purpose, the desire of unification that would prevent the effectuation of the Third Man's argument as we have seen, which has eluded the speaker throughout the entire process as he has not yet fully committed to it. This aim converges in his last two appeals, first in the reference to Dante the speaker yields all sense of restlessness and inquiry (v. 214), the surrendering of his own will and existence in the unifying essence of God, in which all yearning for a higher state, all desire, is quenched in *"that sea whereunto everything is moving which it creates and which nature makes."* (*Paradiso* III 67-96); which as we have argued would put an end to his quest, thwarting the effectuation of the Third Man's argument if his wish is finally granted. The certainty of such an event eludes us as it does to the reader, as the poetic voice's final entreaty, the answer in catholic mass to the priest's *"Hear my prayer, O Lord"* (Psalm 102) is never answered, since he is aware of the loss of the language that is capable of communicating with God. However the speaker is also conscious that regardless of the reply he has achieved one of his aims, poetic creation, that on his waiting for the restitution of the Word of creation, this process alongside his words, have enabled him if not to be redeemed at least to construct, undergo, and eternally re-experience the process through which that objective may finally be realised.

5. Vindication of the poet.

Ash Wednesday, as we have seen, brings together the mythical, the mystical, and the metaliterary in the effort of the poet and the poetic voice of bringing together elements that on first sight seem discordant. Although the efforts of the poet to reach the Absolute are far from being fulfilled he has achieved the means through which his desires may find if not satisfaction, at least some degree of transcendence. The ambivalence and uncertainty that characterises the poem prevents any asseveration regarding the attainment of the poetic voice's final aim, but given the religious thematic of the poem the resolution of its conclusion may require an act of faith. Consequently in the sixth and last part of the poem, between the dialectic of the loss of the Grace, the consciousness of the world and the nostalgia of all that we have lost, in that final cry for redemption, both voices come together. The two of them reunite in that prayer, which answers to very different reasons. The poet, expresses his desire to return to the state of Grace lost in Paradise long ago. The second one, the speaker, is just asking for the voice that allows him to be a poet, and to be able to create with his dreamed Word, for the moment expressed with his own vain but humble words. To be a poet is, in our opinion, to keep on fighting for lost causes, and in this poem, T. S. Eliot, makes a statement about that lost cause. What makes him a poet, in Ash-Wednesday, is the attempt to gain a voice that he has not, but while doing it, he becomes the recipient of the Gift that enables him to be a poet. It is in this single prayer where the voices of the poet, the man and the poetic voice come together to ask for the creation word to be restored, and if, as it has been argued, creation through words has been finally attained, then the word might finally reach his destination, and be redemptive.

And let my cry come on to Thee.

NOTES:

1 The lapse could be construed as a veiled suggestion to God that he is, in fact, already forgiven; hoping that God may take the bait and let his fault slip through.

2 We venture to claim that the context developed in section VI is based on Da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks,* specifically on the London's version, which would serve to explain the reference to the *"blue rocks"*, the *"bent golden-rod"*, and perhaps is connected with the reference to the Odyssey's *"gates of sawn ivory"* in that the elements depicted in the painting are idealized, not naturally accurate.

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Rethinking Thinking and Knowing from a African Perspective: Towards an Epistemology of Intermediality

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Introduction

Theoretical evaluation of the possibility, extent and accuracy of human knowledge, which originates from and forms the primary focus of philosophical epistemology, also constitute the core of the debates in many other disciplines. That suggests the prime place of philosophical epistemology in the academic space. As an intellectual discipline, epistemology presents itself as an engine room to examine the extent of human knowledge within the purview of its own theoretical horizon and also to identify and to possibly handle sceptical objections to the possibility of human knowledge in all other fields of intellectual endeavours. Unfortunately, the question of how we go about acquiring and maintaining knowledge, which forms part of the nucleus of epistemology still has countless aspects begging for further investigations (Georg Brun and Dominique Kuenzle (forthcoming). The focus of this paper does not pretend to provide any final answer to any or all of the numerous grey areas of epistemology begging for scholarly attention. It does not intend to carry out any empirical research regarding the process of knowing or on what factors contribute or intervene in the act of knowing. Rather, it attempts only to expose the weaknesses of some previously given explanations of the process of knowing or acquiring knowledge, and identify some dynamisms involved in the process, with an ultimate interest to attract intellectual in theoretical philosophy to the emerging debates on intermediality.

The question of human knowledge has been discussed in various dimensions such as "what is knowledge?" "Where does knowledge come from?" "What are the bases for knowledge claims?" "How do we know?" and "When do we know?" "To what extent can we claim to know, and on what basis?" and "what is the relationship (if any) between knowledge and related concepts such as belief, perception, intuition, emotion and testimony?" Although it is virtually impossible to discuss an aspect of knowledge in epistemology without any touch on other aspects, this paper will be concerned mostly with explaining what it takes to know or what processes are involved in knowing. That is, the discussion in this paper will revolve round the question of the processes and epistemological events involved in the act of knowing. Rather than attempting to carry out any empirical demonstration, this discussion takes the rationalism-empiricism divide as the point of departure. Ultimately, it hopes to complement the existing literature in philosophical epistemology and at the same time advocating a review of the existing theoretical positions that do not countenance with the influence that modern intermedial innovation could have on the process of knowing in philosophical epistemology.

It should be noted that the rest of this paper is not to describe any experiment on how any particular media generates knowledge or how knowledge could have been impossible without the new media technologies, let alone to argue that intermediality which describe the interconnectivity between various media could form a foundational basis for certainty. Rather, I am interested in analysing the very concept of intermediality as an emerging and unique interaction (inter) between the different ways people communicate with others, such as newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet authorship (media). It represents what happens when traditionally ascribed, ontologically separate forms of arts and a variety of different media meet, merge and synergise interdependently into the territory of one another (Chapple, 2008: 7-14). The ultimate objective is to support the need for a review of positions in traditional philosophical epistemology. It is also noteworthy that there is currently a bold lack of attention to the emerging concept and subfield of intermediality from theoretical philosophy. Only a few (if any in the strict sense of it) known scholars have offered theoretical analysis on the issue from the point of view of both theoretical and practical academic philosophy. If therefore the function of philosophy is to offer competing theories and explanations or it is to make a critique of existing theories and explanations of scholars and experts from other fields, the dearth of intellectual materials, theories and analyses from philosophy scholars at this moment clearly represents an omission or neglect to which this paper serves to invite scholarly attention accordingly.

As Shaffer and Clinton (1999: 283–300) couch it

> *...technological shift has changed our understanding of thinking. The field of cognitive science was based on the advent of computers, when theorists such as Newell and Simon (1956, 1972) and Anderson (1980, 1993) described human cognitive activity in terms of computational processes (see also Pinker, 1997). These models challenged the behaviorist paradigm by providing testable assertions about otherwise implicit cognitive activity within the mind of an individual. More recently, sociocultural theories—including activity theory (Engeström, 1999; Tikhomirov, 1999), mediational means (Wertsch, 1998) and distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995; Norman, 1993; Pea, 1993)—have argued that mind does not exist solely within an individual but arises in activity. Intelligence, these theories suggest, is an attribute of a system involving multiple individuals and the tools they use in a larger social context.*

Postman, Neil (xxxxx: 22-24) corroborates the argument of Shaffer and Clinton Shaffer and Clinton. He posits that:

> truth does not, and never has, come unadorned. It must appear in its proper clothing or it is not acknowledged.... As a culture moves forward from orality to writing to printing to televising, its ideas of truth move with it…we might add that every epistemology is the epistemology of a stage of media development. Truth, like time itself, is a product of a conversation man has with himself about and through the techniques...he has invented.

Given the enormity of the issues involved in social and technological change, scholars in philosophical epistemology stand no chance of being relevant while ignoring or remaining indifferent against the current of theoretical vibrancy in other fields.

The popular stories in epistemology have been in two dimensions. One proposes that we acquire knowledge through the senses alone: we call this, the empiricist school of thought. The other, casting grave doubt on the reliability and even on the possibility of acquiring knowledge through the senses, argues that we acquire knowledge through reason alone. The latter school of thought is named the rationalist school. In various fashions, scholars have traditionally been divided between these two seemingly opposing schools of thought, with some taking a somewhat mid-courses and others opting for eclectism.

Although, there is now a shift from understanding epistemology as a theory of justification than as a theory of knowledge that it used to be known (compare Hamlyn, 1977 and Kazeem, 2009: 52-58), the best way to react to traditional divides in philosophical epistemology is to identify the gulf in a manner that support the rationale of the intended objection. To do so in this paper, it is reasonable considering the possibility of non-professional philosophy reader to begin with re-examining some of the basic assumptions of rationalism (Bonjour, 2011: 283-293, 1998) and its empiricist (*see* Chisholm,1978: 347-354, 1972) opponent. In sum, rationalism in its classical formulation represents the belief that we can attain knowledge at its very best only trough reason. Empiricism is the direct opposite of rationalism which holds that there can be no perfect knowledge and that the best we can attain is the putative knowledge through the senses.

Specifically, the paper argued that since two people cannot have the same present experience, and that even if they do, they still cannot derive the same meaning, it implies that knowledge acquisition goes beyond reason or experience or mere combination of both to a more complex structure unexplored by scholars in the rationalist/empiricist divide traditional epistemology.

If knowledge were to derive in practice from reason alone, it probably could have been possible for two more persons to have the exactly the same present knowledge, by merely reasoning the same way either logically or otherwise. On the other hand, if it were also the case that experience alone determines knowledge, perhaps two different people may coincide at a point of exact experience. If either or both

experience alone and reason alone is true, the probability of sameness in knowledge is by implication assured. If false, then, there is more to knowing than the two scholarly divides have shown or are logically capable of showing.

The selection of rationalism and empiricism for the purpose of this paper does not generate from an ignorance of other theoretical positions such as or/and other than pragmatism and phenomenology. The objective of the paper is to show that whenever we claim to know, there are more intervening factors (referred to collectively as media) than scholars had previously accepted, using the examples of the core divides in traditional epistemology. In carrying out the promises of the paper, it employs a historio-critical multi-disciplinary approach that makes it acceptable and reader-friendly to scholars in philosophy other disciplines without compromising its disciplinary rigour.

Knowledge, Knowing and Intermedia Semiosis

In this part, we shall concern ourselves with arguments supporting numerous ways of knowing including those previously accepted in traditional epistemology with an ultimate to show that the process of knowing and factors involved in the process are more multiple than the traditional epistemology has acknowledged, and therefore advocating further research in philosophical epistemology and in every other fields, to re-examine the popular beliefs on how we humans do acquire knowledge. It is likely the case that doing so will offer a new wide horizon in epistemology and its methods of analysis in a fast changing world.

The nature of knowledge determines the process of acquiring it and the process through which knowledge is acquired also determines the nature of what knowledge could be acquired. Generally it is assumed that there are various kinds of knowing such as knowing how, knowing when, knowing that, knowing about, knowing what or knowing why; though acquaintance, inference or description . In dealing with all the different forms of knowing and knowledge we find out we deal with a wide scope of factors, media and things. These includes a huge number and variety of objects, physiological states, human and artificial devices, moods or factors such as tables, concepts, thoughts, imaginations, propositions, memories, expectations, artworks, spirits, perceptual and extra-perceptual entities, physical and metaphysical entities, properties, facts, states of affair, vocal and non-vocal, visual and non-visual entities and so on.

Reason and Experience: In spite of the complexities involved when considered from the point of view of things towards which human knowledge could be directed, philosophers generally have acknowledged the possibility of knowing through reason (rationalism), experience (empiricism), emotion and will (existentialism) and intuition (phenomenology) at least. Averagely, scholars have defended the possibility of knowing through reason and some have argued that we can know through reason alone. Scholars have equally defended the position that it is possible to know through the senses, while others insist that knowledge comes through the senses alone. However, the problem arises when the truth of one position necessarily implies the

falsity of the other. Traditionally, empiricists of the Lockean tradition believes that the physical objects affect the senses, while classical rationalism suggests that reason alone determines what could be known and the extent to which we can know. In these ideal senses, the truth of one position necessarily negates the possibility of the other position being true, as it is the case with all traditional positions in their classical or ideal senses. Give the numerous objections to knowing through reason alone, or through reason especially or through sense experience alone or through sense experience especially, an eclectic option becomes enticing as a theoretical solution to the divides. Eclectic position in this sense is a mere naive combination of the varying theoretical positions.

Synergic Option: Unfortunately, there is nothing in the eclectic option to suggest that it portends a superior viability as a theoretical alternative to either of the former divides. It is utterly challenged by logic because, on the one hand, it would be impossible in the first place to combine reason alone and sense experience alone. On the other hand, the truth of one necessarily negates the truth of the other. The choice of one necessarily excludes the other. The option of combining both is completely ruled out, so also the possibility of bypassing the weaknesses of each. That is, perhaps, it would have been possible in some way to avoid all the weaknesses and objections raised against either of the positions (rationalism and empiricism) if it were possible to combine both, but that alternative route is also ruled out.

An alternative route is to drop the "alone" which mutually demarcate the two alternatives irreconcilably. If we eliminate the "alone" qualification from reason alone and sense alone, the result would be that knowledge could be attained through reason and the senses or reason especially and sense experience especially. As attractive as that option appears, many scholars have begun since Heidegger and Sartre to consider human emotion or/and intuition rather than reason and/or sense experience as the main source of human knowledge. According to Georg Brun and Dominique Kuenzle (forthcoming)

> *even though emotions are often part of processes of knowledge production, they did not immediately attract the externalists' attention. It was largely assumed that the function of the justification condition, whether spelt out in internalist or externalist terms, is to rule out beliefs that are merely accidentally true. Consequently, only those features of belief-forming processes that systematically contribute to the truth of their products were seen as normatively, and hence epistemologically, relevant. Insofar as emotions seem particularly fallible, they do not seem epistemologically relevant.*

Scholars also initially distinguish between reason and emotion based on their thinking that emotion involves normative judgements and decisions, which in their view are irrational.

Contrastivity: Generally, a situation of knowledge claim presupposes a discovery of a binary sort. For instance, *p* knows that *q* (e. g. Zorgia (*p*) knows that Spagnolo is in the

kitchen (*q*)) or if *p* therefore *q* (if Hilary Clinton becomes the president of America (*p*) Nigerians will suffer (*q*) usually symbolised as p ë q) (Kvanvig 2011: 25-36). Since F. Dretske (1972: 411-37) however, scholars in various fields have come at least to realise that knowing as an epistemic phenomena does not involve binary relations alone. Following the argument of Dretske, when a man sees an animal in zoo, and based on experience he knows (justified in believing) that it is a zebra. He does not merely believe that it is a zebra, rather, his belief that it is a zebra is such that he is also justified in believing that it is not a bull, or limousine or an angel or a boxer, because his experience rules out the possibility it is any of those alternatives. Jonathan Schaffer (2004:73-103), Antti Karjalainen, and Adam Morton (2003 74–89), Bredo Johnsen (2001: 385–406), Bas Van Fraassen, (1980) and even Christopher Read Hitchcock (1996) have adopted and at different times developed this contrastivist position initiated by Dretske. Morton specifically defends the statement that "...knows that *p* rather than that *q*" is more informative and has advantages over simple "...knows that p." According to Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (2008:257-270), contrastivists generally holds that all claims of reasons are relative to contrast classes. He further holds that the contrastive approach is relevant not only in the field of epistemology but also in various other fields involved in investigating human knowledge. He sees contrastivism as a movement comparable with others such as existentialism. The merit of Sinnott-Armstrong's position notwithstanding, contrastivists believe that when we claim to know in such a binary statement relation as *p* knows that *q*, it should rather have been *p* knows that *q* rather than *s* in order to clearly specify the extent and perspectives of the knowing.

Going a little further, Morton (2003: 74) says:

> *A person can have a belief that involves the combination of several items of information. Sylvia might believe that the man in front of her is drunk. This combines three pieces of information: that (someone) it is in front of her, that it is a man, and that it is drunk* (emphasis mine).

Morton is right to claim that knowing or believing involves several bits of information even though the observer or claimant might be unaware of the full implication his position being correct.

Ignorance: In an African dimension, it is of interest to note that in *Ifa*; one of the African mediums of knowing popular in Yoruba, Brazil and the Latin America generally, Orunmila is reported to have taught that *Ona sisi nii mu ni mo ona* (Karenga, 1999: 254). That is, "it is through missing the way that we come to know the way." By implication, even opposites and negations (via negationis) have their positive epistemic qualities and relevance.

The logical implication of the foregoing is that in the process of knowing, both reason and experience could be necessary and complementary. In fact, some scholars have in recent time defended positions close to arguing that rationality and intentionality are equally involved in emotion as in any other systems and processes of cognition (Sousa, 2002: 247–63, 2004: 61–75, Kenny, 2003, Rorty, 2004: 269–78). Traditionally,

epistemologists look askance of emotion and hold it in disdain as privation of knowledge. These notwithstanding, as long as emotion possibly contribute to the process of knowledge production, it could be virtually impossible to clearly distinguish between situations where it has contributed from those in which it has not in any way influence a belief.

Belief: Furthermore, according to Peter Murphy (2013), a person inferentially knows a conclusion only if he knows and believes each of the claims from which the conclusion is essentially inferred. At least one cannot claim to know that *p* without first believing that *p*. For instance, a person cannot claim to know that a lionphant exists when she/he actually believes that it is false that lionphant exists. Otherwise, the knowledge claim from an unbelieved inference cannot be taken seriously (Murphy, 2013:311–317). By implication, each of the claims from which the present conclusion is inferred is a conclusion also previously or concurrently inferred. The implication is that the knowledge of the claims from which they were also inferred are also necessary. The chain of claims, inferences and conclusions required to infer any present conclusion suggests two possibilities.

Memory and its Re-evaluation: On the one hand, knowledge of every claim other than the present inference can be treated as past events, which affect the present event as memory would. That is, the present inferential knowledge builds on previously acquired bits of knowledge in order of succession. For instance, my claim that if rain falls then grass will grow is inferred from my previous experience of rain falling and grass growing. It is also built on my knowledge of things call rain, grass, growth and falling at least. It means that my claim to know that if rain falls grass will grow is founded on my previous knowledge.

On the other hand, it also implies that the explanation that the present inference is built on past experiences and previously inferred conclusions is over simplistic. Whenever we want to infer certain conclusion, and the present conclusion is to be based on our previous conclusions, the rational thing to do is to actually re-evaluate the previously inferred conclusion before inferring the new one. For instance, if you have previously inferred from other inferences that all soldiers are corrupt, and you have also inferred that Babangida is a soldier. To infer logically that Babangida is corrupt, it is reasonable to re-evaluate the previously inferred conclusions in order to ensure that one is making the right claim. That is, you should ask yourself: are all soldiers actually or still corrupt now, and am I still sure that Babangida is a soldier? Implicitly and perhaps unconsciously we re-evaluate previous experiences and conclusions to establish all new ideas.

Human Will and Decision Making: It is also arguable that we can never know what we do not know, because whatever we do not know remains unknown to us, and we know that we know only when we are aware of our knowledge of a thing. Consequently, we may neither consciously choose to know nor not to know what we do not know that we know not. This situation notwithstanding, in the process of crossing from ignorance to knowledge (whenever possible) about anything involves some forms of decisions.

From the foregoing analyses in addition to the advice from Dretske, Schaffer and Murphy, the process of knowing presents a very complex and descriptively elusive process.

In another sense however, the human will cannot be denied as part of the contributing factors in the process of knowing if humans are to be justifiably held responsible for their actions. The inability to hold the human actor responsible for his/her actions is one of the main illogicality that has plagued the ethically inclined epistemologies of Leibniz and Spinoza no less than those of the empiricist tradition. There is no empirical apparatus or otherwise to determine whether humans are responsible for their actions or not. However, it is logical to assume that the only way by which a person may be praised or blamed for his/her actions is to have determined the actions. That is, for instance, the only way praise Leibniz or Spinoza for their theories is for there to exist a method by which they could be said to have consciously initiated and created their theories.

Inference through Comparison: If knowing involves contrasting as Dretske and Schaffer have suggested, and the events to be contrasted are as complex and limitless as the view of Murphy has been interpreted to mean, it would also imply that there are unlimited number of statements and real situations (contrasts) against which every knowledge claims is contrasted at any situation of knowledge claim.

For instance, if claiming to know that I am typing on the keyboard of my computer (TKC) implies knowing that I am typing on the keyboard of my computer (TKC) rather than I am inscribing on the chalkboard (TCB), the story certainly cannot end there. It extends to such statements such as "I am typing rather than merely inscribing, looking, drumming, dancing, playing etc on the keyboard rather than on the CPU, or mouse or anything else of my rather than your, his, her, our or their computer rather than car, dining table, couch or floor".

In another example, if I say that James Clinton was born on the 12th of June, 2012, it should be stretched further in Dretske's term to the following or more ways:

a. that a particular James Clinton rather than anyone else (with the entire population in the world in focus)
b. was born rather than maimed or anything else (including all the physical and non-physical events that occurred or could have occurred)
c. on the 12th rather than any other date (30 days)
d. of June rather than any other month on the year
e. 2012, rather than any other year that ever were and could ever be.

To claim to know the statement "James Clinton was born on the 12th of June, 2012" involves some form of comparison with the entirety of reality. Given the positions of Dretske and Schaffer, every act of contrasting involves contrasting the totality of reality.

The implications of the foregoing analyses are:

1. In Dretske and Schaffer's terms: Entire reality is involved in every act of knowing.

2. In Murray's terms: a person inferentially knows a conclusion only if he knows each of the claims from which the conclusion is essentially inferred, it means either that it is impossible to account for anything or that it is impossible to begin to account for anything in the first instance. That is, to account for any present knowledge involves every bit of knowledge from the very first act of knowing in one's own life. Since that very first act of knowing also requires the complementarity of another previous knowledge, the implication is that it is probably impossible to account for any knowledge in the first place.

Given the above analyses, it implies either that knowledge is impossible or that there is more to the process than mere reason and experience in classical empiricism and classical rationalism terms. To put it differently, if knowledge is possible, it would mean that the scholars have not got the right description of the processes and factors involved.

Emotion and the Existentialist Irrationality: It must be acknowledged however, that just as it has not been finally proved that either the senses alone or reason alone accounts for human knowledge, so also it is that neither rationalism nor empiricism has been completely refuted. The simple logical implication is that perhaps, both reason and the senses have parts to play in the acquisition of knowledge. If knowledge must be possible, the synergic (not mere or naive eclectic process) complementarity of rationalism and empiricism seems a more viable option to consider. Such complementarity corroborates the claim of Jacque Maritain that knowledge involves an immaterial synergy or semiotic union between the knowing subject and the known object (*see* Omoregbe, 1998: 98-99). The debate, by implication, is not limited to empiricism and rationalism alone. There are also the existentialists who argue not necessarily for the senses in opposition to knowing through reason, but even to emotion or in a more classical form to irrationalism. Unamuno (The Tragic Sense of Life) as representative of existentialism argues that it is an overstatement to claim that man is a rational being. In his view, knowledge acquisition involves more of feelings than reason. Sartre goes even further to describe it, not as mere feeling or emotion, but irrationality. The truth of this position notwithstanding, if reason and emotion or feeling are aspects of human psychological make-up, it is logically unimaginable that one will be able to employ one completely devoid of the influence of the other.

Going a little further, Husserl argues that certain prejudices and previously acquire influences are capable of creating obstacles between us and real knowledge (Omoregbe, 100). He advises that in acquiring knowledge, it is necessary to first employ what he called the phenomenological epoche or the phenomenological reduction to put aside all our previous assumption about the phenomenon that we plan to study. The implication of Husserl's position is that if it is ever true that some previously acquired assumptions are capable of preventing us from having a true knowledge, then it may also be possible that there are other previous assumptions that could even assist us in the process of knowing. Whether this is true or not, there is still another problem of knowing where to halt process of phenomenological reduction before an

investigator is left with emptiness or nothing. "All these, in Omoregbe's expression, may be mere exaggerations, they at least underscore the importance of reason, the senses, emotion and other events in the world (sic) in human life and in epistemological pursuit, a fact which philosophers of the past tended to ignore" (102).

Psychic Related Factors and Signs: Given the foregoing argument of this paper, the possibility exists that the totality of events in the universe, far more than have been enumerated in this paper account for each event that happens. The possibility also exists as Makinde (92-93) attributes to Hume that anything can account for anything or, as E. Lorenz (1979) insinuates that perhaps the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas. That is, distance in terms of space and time does not foreclose the possibility of interaction. These possibilities notwithstanding, they only suggest and perhaps support the possibility that multiple events in complex interactions are involved in the occurrence of any particular events.

Furthermore, there are other events that, given their psych-epistemic nature are capable of influencing the process of knowing. Some scholars such as Scheles have even taken positions that amount to defending that some of them such as emotion are the source or cause of knowing. Bacon tells us the impact of prejudice, previous assumptions, and culture in the process of acquiring knowledge. It could also involve childhood or family background, myths, fears, news, movies, will, imaginations, expectations, cultural beliefs, particular events in the past, dreams, aspirations, images or sounds. Their effects could be negative as Descartes, Bacon or Husserl would argue, it could also be positive as Unamuno, Pascal or some of the existentialists would want us to believe. The fact however is that the probability of its contribution is undeniable. It is in fact difficult to argue that an event (mental or physical) in the universe could occur in isolation or independent of all other past and present events. The relationship or interaction uniting all these seemingly independent events into a functional whole cannot be explained in any straight jacket manner as rationalism, empiricism or any of their traditional alternatives have tried to make us believe in epistemology. If we are unable to severe interactions between spatially proximate phenomena or events, how logically can we deny the possibility of interaction between the Tornado in Texas and the flapping of a butterfly's wing in Brazil or between the sigh of Jesus on the cross and the tearing of the veil in the temple?

In African thought system, making a claim of causal link between two events that are not spatially proximate or whose link cannot be empirically verified is not strange all together. The chanting of some incantations in Lagos could be said to be responsible for the death of another man in London. The cause of the ailment of another woman in Beijing could be traced to a woman in Abuja. The wealth of a successful businessperson in Port Harcourt could be said to be the result of a sacrifice or ritual performed by his/her mother somewhere far away in his village of origin in Kwazulu-Natal.

Should personal experience be of any relevance in this paper, I still remember an experience of something that happened about the early 1980s. There was an inter-

community farmland dispute and youths from my quarter of the village were gathered at the market square. After a short deliberation, we were instructed to march to the site of the dispute. As a very devoted boy from a Christian family, I hesitated, not because of any opinion regarding the substance of the dispute, but because there were utterances made, which I considered fetish. But as a result of peer pressure and because my eldest sister was married to a man from the other community, I felt I had no choice but to follow, lest someone read meanings to it that I had compromised the position of my community. That is just half the story, the other part of the story is that the part leading to the site in question was a footpath. At that time, only employed teachers and senior civil servants could afford motor bikes. That category or class of people was not easy to come by at home during such a mid-day period when the meeting took place. Secondly, the class of elders who addressed us should, in my estimation be in their nineties and above. They were not the class of people who either could ride or be carried on a bicycle. Many of the youths came on their bicycles. Immediately after the address, they sped to the farm site. I was lucky, I got an older friend who carried me on his bicycle and, like others we raced off to the place. I was among the first eight or nine youths to reach the place. However, I got there to see one of the strangest thing in my life. The same elders who addressed us a few minutes past were already at the site in question. I tried to find out how the elders managed to reach the place before us. The best explanation given to me was that I would understand when I grew older. Others simply cautioned me from asking unnecessary questions. Other epistemological implications of the event notwithstanding, the fact is that as a mature adult from Isua-Akoko; an African community, I can hardly ever ask the same question any longer, and I can better understand why only children and outsiders could ask certain questions. In my opinion too, the link between the elders arriving at the scene earlier than others and whatever may have sped up their movement may not be too may not be more unscientific than the relationship between the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas. Superficially, they appear unscientific. However, in the word of George Bernard Shaw (Chambers, R. 1990, 140); "You see things and you say why? But, I dream things that never were, and I say why not?" Whatever the case however, it would not be strange if the same event happens today and I find some women sitting on a mat of feathers and reciting some incantations.

The issue here is not about whether the sitting on the feather mat that took the elders to the site or not. The point however, is that Africans have long understood or speculated about the possibility of some synergic interactions between separate events whose connections are not easily empirically observable. In African traditional medicine, to treat a broken bone on a person's foot, the native doctor could break the leg of a chicken such that when the leg of the chicken is becoming healed, the leg of the human victim also became healed in the same progression. It is also a common story to hear of someone who had an accident and broke his left arm seven days after someone in his village had broken the left arm of a carved image named after the victim. As the Latin saying goes: *ex Africa semper aliquid novi* (there is always something new from

Africa), there is a particular weird story from an African countryside called Isua as it is in many other communities. The People believe that if a married woman engages in an extra-marital sex, either her husband, children or herself will die in no distant time, and the death will be preceded by some strange occurrences around the family. The phenomenon in question has, like many others failed to attract scholarly attention even from among African scholars and anthropologists. The attitude of scholars notwithstanding, it is a sort of psych-semiotic scheme described variously as African symbolism, African semiosis or simply as myth.

The point is not whether the stories are actually true or not. Of course, some of such stories are hardly ever credible. The fact however, is that Africans have long thought about the possibility that the entire world is one single system in a synergic link. Perhaps, the telephone system and other communication gadgets could never have come into being if someone never gave it a thought that the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil could set off a tornado in Texas or not.

The epistemological status of African thought systems notwithstanding, the argument of this paper is that the mono-media patterns of rationalism or empiricism are inadequate explanations of human knowledge. The entire universe perhaps is a synergic system with surer links than human reason have ever discovered. The fact however that we have not rationally or empirically observe the connections in question should not be sufficient reasons to deny their existence as traditional empiricists and traditional rationalists have done. The point here is not that the connections necessarily exist. Rather, the argument is that there are not genuine reasons to deny that numerous phenomena come into play in the act of knowing (de Vreese, 2006: 125-150), and that if that is true, it means that the world could causally be connected than scholars have acknowledged. Even if the contents of the study are not definitive and are assailable, its stories hang together logically and, the arguments credibly lead to the conclusions inferred.

Following the trajectory of this discussion, do we then conclude in an eclectic fashion that a conglomeration of universal events accounts for any present knowledge? Of course, that is also a possibility. However, there is nothing in the discussion so far to necessarily suggest that. Although the totality of universal events (reality) is suggested as accounting for any present event, the relationship between these events as suggested by Maritain is synergic rather than mere combination or chaotic conglomeration. A synergic relationship is different from mere combination. In a mere combination, there may or may not be any influence on each other among the various components, but in synergic relationship, an orderly influence on one another is a given. For any claim to knowledge therefore, the influence and participation of the totality of reality working together in a synergic interaction seems more probable, logical and more intellectually viable than to assume that reason alone or the senses alone or any of the other components working alone account for our knowledge.

There is one more problem here. If we must accept that reason alone is incapable of giving us knowledge and neither the senses nor any other aforementioned

component acting alone can bring us to know or give us any reliable knowledge, should we also accept that human knowledge is also determined by those components working together as a synergy? In some sense, yes, because the knowing subject is part and parcel of the totality of reality working in a synergic mode.

From the argument to support the belief that the plethora of factors or the totality of reality are involved in every act of knowing, it becomes probable that the process of knowing or acquiring knowledge is far more complex than the traditional epistemology has discovered or analysed. If the positions of Shaffer and Clinton (1999: 283–300) and Postman, Neil (xxxxx: 22-24) that a changing human society cannot afford to be established on a static conception of truth, knowledge and epistemology are anything to go by, then there is the need for a changing, dynamic and constant re-evaluation of positions in philosophical epistemology in order to further re-energise the debates in other fields.

Conclusion

The paper takes up the traditional positions in epistemology that knowledge comes from sense experience or from reason alone. It examines the process involved in knowing from the point of view of invents involved. The paper comes to the position that there are not genuine reasons to deny that numerous and perhaps uncountable number of phenomena comes into play in the act of knowing. If that is anything to reckon with, it means that the entire reality could causally be connected synergically than scholars have acknowledged. It is therefore inferred that the act of knowing is inter-media. The connection between physical and non-physical events and between the numerous events, the act of knowing and the knower and even the entire reality are semiotic linked. The ability of a human mind to grasp the knowledge of the process while remaining part of the process is itself a psychological event of a class apart. It implies that the entire universe, regardless of how event in it appear to be free standing are linked in a synergic whole. The active or causal link between the universally connected events is more complex and semiotic such that every act of knowing involves multilevel and multimedia code switching. Given the aforementioned intermediality of the universal semiotic synergy, philosophical epistemology can neither ignore nor remain indifferent in the ongoing vibrant debate in relation to intermediality and the changing conceptual scheme and expect to be relevant to human society.

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Thinking(,)Love: On Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou

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Love, as generally conceived, erects insuperable walls against the cold interrogations of philosophical thought. Hospitable to the poet, priest, and psychoanalyst, love denies entry to the philosopher who remains unable to advance beyond the barriers that love constructs. The philosopher is then left with a few options, among them: to proclaim that love is illusory, to insist that it is a problem that philosophy is unable to surmount, or to translate what the poet, priest, or psychoanalyst says in his own idiom, granting their pronouncements a modicum of philosophical dignity sans the rigor of philosophical thought. Love is thus somewhat of an embarrassment for philosophy. Confused and tongue-tied, do not philosophers exhibit symptoms associated with the love-struck every time they speak of love?

The poverty in the thinking of love, as philosopher Jean Luc-Nancy rightly observes, stems from the problem of exhaustion (245); exhaustion in at least two senses: first, we have run out of new and meaningful things to say about love and second, we are getting tired of making old ideas seem novel, of pouring old wine into new bottles, so to speak. This exhaustion in thought is undergirded by the universal consensus that love is that which lies beyond the domain of the thinkable. As dominantly conceived, it is simply ungraspable intensity that cannot be held down by the restrictive grip of any theory. Paradoxically, it is the metaphorical language of poetry and art—"in the musical ejaculation of novelistic subtleties"—that provides the most "direct" method to render love somewhat accessible to thought (Badiou, *Scene of Two*). According to philosopher Alain Badiou, this anti-philosophical position installs the thinking of love within the "multiplicity of language games" where it is oriented toward infinite description that is perpetually subject to the shifting and unstable laws of the linguistic universe rather than oriented toward the production of truth ("Philosophy and Desire" 35). Indeed, it is a way of thinking love that begets exhaustion by being circuitously inexhaustible.

Love and thinking thus make for strange bedfellows, and trite as this may sound, it has nevertheless become a sedimented idea that even the most eminent theorists feel the need to challenge. When Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue for the need to reconceptualize love within political theory in *Commonwealth*, they felt it necessary to make a preemptive strike against skeptics: "Yes, we know [love] makes many readers uncomfortable. Some squirm in their seats with embarrassment and others smirk with superiority" (179). In *Finite Thinking*, Jean-Luc Nancy speaks of the intellectual paralysis that occurs when one attempts to philosophize about love: "Has not the impossibility of speaking about love been…violently recognized….We know the words of love to be inexhaustible, but as to speaking *about* love, could we perhaps be exhausted?" (245). The challenge posed by these thinkers then is how to think of the relationship of love and knowledge that does not lead to either embarrassment or exhaustion.

It is difficult to determine what the ambitious project of rethinking love entails? Does it entail purifying love from various conceptual contaminations?[1] Or, does it entail a Foucauldian search for a pre-lapsarian moment in history before love was shamelessly co-opted by the prevailing epistemic regime? Drawing primarily from the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou, I suggest that to rethink love has to begin with thinking about the relationship of love and thought, for it is an occasion that obligates one to realize the "intimate connivance between love and thinking", to use the words of Jean-Luc Nancy (247). Thought is undergirded by love, and love is undergirded by thought. The degree of this "intimate connivance," for Nancy, means that thinking itself is love. For Nancy as well as for Badiou love is not cheap sentimentality. It is not an emotion, passion, nor is it an affect. It is not an ideological illusion that colludes with the dominant bourgeois morality and conceals the logic of advanced capitalism that covertly structures modern relationship (as some radical theorists accused it to be). It is, rather, a condition of thinking.

Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou inhabit almost incompatible domains of thought; yet, quite interestingly their thought productively intersect when it comes to the idea of communism and of love. They see both as an exigency for the future of thought. For both Badiou and Nancy the importance of communism and of love remains something to come. Yet, whereas the two are rather prolific on the topic of communism their reflections on love seem to be more tentative rather than sustained. Even Badiou's book-length work love is a modest 104 pages, and is uncharacteristically informal, impressionistic, and anecdotal. Consequently, my own work follows the ponderous pace of their thought. It should be noted that in proposing "a new style of philosophy", Badiou argues that thinking "requires leisureliness and not speed" (*Infinite* 58). It has to be, in a way, off beat with the mad dance of capitalism:

> Our world is marked by speed: the speed of historical change; the speed of technical change; the speed of communications; of transmissions; and even the speed in which human beings establish connections with one another…Speed is the mask of inconsistency. Philosophy must propose a retardation process (*Infinite Thought* 51).

Thinking then must proceed at a tempo that would allow it to properly unfold. It should not be limited to producing knowledge about the structure of the situation (and thus synchronized with the pulse of world); rather, it should prepare us to "receive

and accept the drama of the Event without anxiety," and is "open to the irreducible singularity of what happens…fed and nourished by the surprise of the unexpected" (55-56). Perhaps the surprise of an unexpected occurrence of love.

Love and Thought's Intimate Connivance: Jean-Luc Nancy on Love

So, what is the relation of love and thought?

Jean-Luc Nancy says that to ask that question is to encounter a profound silence. Nancy writes that it is a question that "asks for extreme reticence as soon as it is solicited" (245). Such reticence suggests that either love cannot or will not offer itself up to the cold calculations of thought, or that we have exhausted what could be said about love. Nancy, however, suggests that the silence that confronts us when we attempt to think love does not signal the poverty of thought. It is not an indicator of intellectual vacuity. In fact, this silence is a result of generosity, "the generosity not to choose between loves, not to privilege, not to hierarchize, not to exclude". The reticence that emerges in the thinking of love is, therefore, not exclusive to love but to any form of thinking worthy of the name. For thought "essentially takes place in the reticence that lets singular moments of experience offer and arrange themselves". For Nancy, all thinking is undergirded by love, and love "does not call for a certain kind of thinking, or for a thinking of love….because thinking most properly speaking, is love" (247). Not to say that love is identical to thinking; rather, love and thinking do not live separate and self-contained lives.

So, now we might ask: if thinking begins with love, when does love begin? For Nancy (and for Badiou as well, but more on this to come), love begins with the utterance of "I love you". If love were an affect, its legibility within the socio-symbolic would carry little weight in confirming its existence; however, for Nancy, what is most vital in love is contained within its declaration: "All of love resides in the fact of saying "I love you" to someone….In a certain sense, "I love you" says it all; everything is contained in "I love you" (2011: 66). For Nancy, this declaration initiates the movement of love, which for him is a dialectical process.

> By being thought according to the dialectic and as the essence of the dialectic, love is assigned to the very heart of the movement of being…If one may say so—and one may rightly, in the most accurate and most proper manner—love is the heart of this dialectic…Love is at the heart of being (251).

Nancy, with hesitation, defines love as "extreme movement, beyond the self, of a being reaching completion" (249). However, with love being the "heart of the dialectic" contradictions become sites of exposure and openness rather than resolved by sublation: "The heart exposes the subject. It does not deny it, it does not surpass it, it is not sublated or sublimated in it; the heart exposes the subject to everything to everything that is not its dialectic and its mastery as a subject" (254). To utter "I love you", to inscribe the existence of love in the domain of the socio-symbolic, marks the genesis of an "extreme movement" of a "being reaching completion" which does not involve sublation of the self or other; rather, the self is exposed, "but what is exposed,

what makes it exposed, is that it is not completed by this process, and it *incompletes itself* to the outside…" (253).

Deviating from standard presentations of love as fusional, Nancy posits that love initiates a cutting, an incision, a fissure. Love shatters self and other, and in this mutual gesture of opening up, an amorous relation (rapport) is formed: "'he, this subject, was touched, broken into, in his subjectivity, and he is from then on, from the time of love, opened by this slice, broken or fractured, even if only slightly . . . From then on, *I* is *constituted broken*" (261). It is challenging to establish conceptual consistency in Nancy's use of metaphors, which, at first blush, even seems contradictory. Touching and caressing are not gestures that one would immediately associate with fracturing and shattering. But what I think Nancy is attempting to demonstrate is the extreme fragility of any supposed self-enclosed and total subject or idea. Love undermines the tendency of thinking to totalize, classify, hierarchize. To touch, to caress are gestures that suggests contact, relation, but not possession nor domination. In English we would say "fully grasp an idea." In Tagalog (Filipino) we use the word *kuha* (meaning to possess but also to grab) to speak of the mastery of an idea or thought. Nancy thus not only defines the relevance of love to thought (which for him are locked in a mutual embrace), but also suggests a way to conceptualize thought itself as non-immediate and non-totalizing. He enacts this approach to thinking and love in his own writing, which appears impressionistic, tentative yet at the same time urgent and carefully considered. In reading "Shattered Love", one is touched by the work, and one only touches it too, never fully grasping it. Commenting on the impact of "Shattered Love", Avital Ronnell writes:

> It has changed lives, it has devastated, it has created ecstatic recognitions and dis-identifications, break-ups, new fusions and so on, multiplied the whole notion of a possible couple and given different modalities of loving and love…It somehow inscribed itself inside me somewhere."

Although she uses the word "inscribe", one might say that the text has "touched" Ronnell. It has shattered her understanding of love, and it the same gesture offered her new possibilities of thinking (about love).

Nancy's contribution to the thinking of love also brackets out concepts of attachment, obsession, and desire. For Nancy, desire is "foreign to love"…[it is] "infelicitous love"…[It] lacks its object…and lacks it while appropriating it to itself (or rather, it appropriates it to itself while lacking it)…[It] is unhappiness without end…" (263). Love is not constructed out of libidinal matter that comes from within the subject; rather, love comes from the outside:

> It does not pass through the outside because it comes from it… Love does not stop, as long as love lasts, coming from the outside. It does not remain outside; it is this outside itself, the other, each time singular, a blade thrust in me, and that I do not rejoin, because it disjoins me (261).

The declaration of love, if uttered sincerely, is a moment of realization that one is open, shattered, exposed. The moment of being touched, fissured, shattered by love, and

exposed to the other, is a crucial moment for thought for it makes possible the communication of *sense* (sens). For Nancy, most forms of communication are moments when rationality merely thinks itself and when a subject converses with itself (despite seeming that he or she is conversing with another). What we often consider to communication between two subjects is really just a dialogue of one: in speaking to you, I speak to myself, and in hearing you I hear myself. Love shatters this echo chamber making it possible to communicate *sense*, a dialogue that occurs "across the absolute incommensurability of speaking positions" (Morin 40).

Given the absolute disjunction between singularities, how do we establish genuine relations with another? Nancy suggests that it is certainly not to place oneself within the "desire of the other" by positioning a total and unified presentation of the self within the other's field of desire (an unconscious tendency that made Jacques Lacan posit the impossibility of sexual relations). It is rather through love, which opens and exposes singularities to themselves and each other.

I Matheme You: Alain Badiou and the Axiomatics of Love

Similar to Jean-Luc Nancy, Alain Badiou sees love as emerging from the gap between two singularities. He challenges the dominant tendency to think of love as attempting to erase that disjunction, suggesting that it is precisely this tendency that is responsible for the poverty in the thinking of love. Badiou like Nancy insists that love and thought occupy the same conceptual space, and in fact ends his meditation on love in his important essay "The Scene of Two" by writing, "I am pleased to conclude that to love is to think" (*Conditions* 261). Badiou arrives at his conclusions though the highly formal process of an "axiomatics of love," which he formulates on the basis of nothing but an "essential conviction" (182). He posits that it is folly to proceed with an analysis of love using "psychology or a theory of passions," for the "experience of the loving subject…does not constitute any knowledge of love"; "love does not think itself" (182). He invites us to imagine love subtracted of the things one is predisposed to spontaneously associate with it, for only when those distractions are jettisoned can a highly formal analysis of love properly take place. For Badiou, logic is the best remedy for the exhaustion that afflicts the thinking of love, arguing that "No theme requires more pure logic than love." Such a scandalous claim is, unsurprisingly, an open invitation for misunderstanding and ridicule. Indeed, one of his critics, a French broadcaster, found it disconcerting that he "would associate austere formulas with the marvelous experience of love", and joked that Badiou abandons "*je t'aime*" (I love you) in favor of "*je te matheme*" (I matheme you)—a dismissive yet amusing pun whose rhetorical power works best on the airwaves where nuance rarely resides. The Romantic legacy had effectively welded passion, emotion, and sentimentality to the amorous experience; yet, Badiou argues that to pursue a philosophical inquiry of love the "pathos of passion, of error, of jealousy, of sex, and of death…must be held at a distance" (183). When Badiou posits that the analysis of love requires pure logic, he invites us to think of love not in terms of affect, emotions, or passions, but via axioms.

Badiou's argument that logic is the most productive method of thinking love is not merely an attempt to shock and provoke. For Badiou, to think love anew requires a complete break from established and sedimented knowledge. Logic cannot simply be supplemented to existing frameworks. There must first be a conceptual clearing. Thus, his philosophy of love begins with an enumeration and nonnegotiable rejections. In particular, he rejects "the fusional conception of love" (for love cannot be a procedure that suppresses the multiple in favor of a One), "the ablative concept of love" (for love is not an experience of the Other but an experience of the world/situation), and "the superstructural or illusory conception of love" (for love is not just an ornament to make smooth the clumsy procedure of sexual relations). The conceptual origins of the first two definitions could be traced back to Romantic theories of love, while the third definition echoes Schopenhauer's philosophy that conceives of love as something manufactured by nature's will-to-live ("What is Love?" 181). For Badiou, love has to be a "production of truth," and all the aforementioned definitions of love sacrifice the production of truth in favor of the rule of the One: the "fusional" conception of love seeks to make a One out of Two; the "ablative," though attempting to produce an authentic knowledge of the Other, is only able to apprehend the Other as an object (*objet a*) within the coordinates of the subject's own fantasy (and thus is also caught in the logic of the One); and the "illusory," makes love a mere pawn in sexuality's regime.

Through his rejections Badiou enacts a conceptual clearing that opens up a space of thought for his very formal and logical approach to love. Liberated thus from thinking of love within those frameworks, Badiou proposes to begin not with feeling but with counting. Love for him is the construction of the amorous situation that he calls the "Scene of Two": One and another One, an immanent Two. To be clear, Badiou distinguishes the Two from the couple. Whereas the two subjects that constitute the scene of Two retain their disjunction the couple is a phenomenal appearance visible to a third position that counts the Two as One. The Two is not the combination of 'one' and 'one' but rather is an immanent Two, a "process" which signals that "there is one position and another position…totally disjunct from the other" ("What is Love?" 187).

Love, Badiou claims, begins with an encounter, a haphazard meeting of pure contingency. It is the amorous encounter that marks the fortuitous moment when the life of one human being randomly intersects with another human being, transforming them both into authentic Subjects (to truth); that is, as authentic agents with the potential for action that is not manipulated by larger structures of power and control. For Badiou, the encounter is "the name of the amorous chance, inasmuch as it initiates the supplement" ("Scene of Two"). By referring to love as a "supplement" Badiou is underscoring his claim that love is not something that belongs to a situation, but something that comes from "outside" it; it is not an element recognized as belonging to a preexisting structure. This properly foreign element opens up possibilities for the amorous subjects of seeing the world anew, from the perspective of the Two instead of from the One. Badiou, in one of his more poetic moments, writes:

> When I lean on the shoulder of the woman I love, and can see, let's say, the peace of twilight over a mountain landscape, gold-green fields, the shadow of trees, black-nosed sheep motionless behind hedges and the sun about to disappear behind craggy peaks, and know—not from the expression of her face, but from within the world as it is—that the woman I love is seeing the same world, and that this convergence is part of the world and that love constitutes precisely, at that very moment, the paradox of an identical difference, then love exists, and promises to continue to exist. The fact is she and I are now incorporated into this unique Subject, the Subject of love that views that panorama of the world though the prism of our difference, so this world can be conceived, be born, and not simply represent what fills my own individual gaze (*In Praise* 25).

It is instructive to underscore the ancillary comment "not from the expression of her face, but from within the world". Badiou hints that we should resist thinking of love within a Levinasian framework; that is, as an ethical relation initiated by the phenomenological encounter with the face that binds the subject to a pre-ontological and infinite responsibility to the other. Rather, love should be properly conceived as an "experience of the world, or of the situation, under the post-evental condition that there were Two" ("What is Love?" 187).

Badiou arrives at this unique understanding of love though the highly formal process of his "axiomatics of love," which he formulates on the basis of nothing but an "essential conviction" ("What is Love" 182). In "What is Love?" Badiou begins by providing three preliminary axioms: (1) "There are two positions of the experience of love" (Man and Woman); (2) "The two positions are totally disjunct"; and (3) "There is no third position" ("What is Love" 183). It is instructive to point out that there is a clear homology between his "axioms" and Lacan's theories on the relation (or lack thereof) of the two sexualized positions. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory similarly claims that there are two sexualized positions designated as "Man" and "Woman." These two positions are purely symbolic and have no biological, empirical, or social basis, but are so termed depending on the subject's relation to the phallic signifier (of wanting *to have* or *to be* the phallus). Those two positions constitute two wholly separate realms of experience, and no real connection between the two positions can be successfully established. This is because the laws of the Symbolic and the deceptive images of the Imaginary always mediate sexual relations; thus, subjects cannot transcend the perimeters defined by their respective fantasies (Hence, Lacan's famous pronouncement: "There is no sexual relation" [*Encore* 6]). However, although Badiou accepts the Lacanian thesis that the two positions are *absolutely* disjunct, he rejects the conventional reading of Lacan when it comes to the role of love in addressing the disjunction. Numerous Lacanian commentators have interpreted Lacan's famous "Love is that which comes to *supplement* for the lack of a real connection" to mean that love is merely this illusion that functions to make amorous subjects misrecognize their fundamental non-connection. Badiou unpacks Lacan's formula by first

interrogating— á la Derrida but certainly a repetition with a difference— the function of the supplement. He argues that if one accepts the thesis that the two sexualized positions are separated by a non-rapport then this non-rapport *cannot* be written, and if it cannot be written, "if it is non-existent as an effect of a structure," it follows that "love itself as supplement can only arrive by chance" ("Scene of Two"). This absolute contingency is crucial in Badiou's project to re-think "love" as a truth-procedure. Love, therefore, is not a relation (in fact, it is born precisely at the point of non-relation), but is a *process* that is "the advent of the Two as such, the scene of Two." Love is the "hypothetical operator" of the accidental collision of two trajectories that is the "event-encounter" ("What is Love" 188).

"There is no third position," Badiou's third axiom, has to do with "the announcement of the disjunction" ("What is Love" 184). The "announcement of the disjunction" cannot be done from the vantage point of a third position because it will necessarily entail the activation of an external law of count, a totalizing gesture governed by the "rule of One." But what kind of interpreting intervention then is necessary to render love discernible within a socio-symbolic system? How can love be inscribed in a Situation as a "Scene of Two" if no position is available from which that love can be witnessed? Badiou posits that love is "fixed only through a naming, and this naming constitutes a declaration, the declaration of love" (188). For Badiou, this declaration puts in circulation within the Situation the truth of the gap that separates the two sexualized positions: "A Two that proceeds amorously is specifically the name of the disjunct as apprehended in its disjunction" (189). And in this gesture of amorous nomination, the truth of the love-event necessarily marks itself onto the bodies of the subjects of love.

However, Badiou's objective is not simply to assert the fundamental disjunction of the sexes, but also to locate the site of a transpositional truth that does not fall within the two positions—that is, a "truth" that is not limited to being exclusively located within the masculine or feminine positions. Thus, Badiou's fourth axiom: "There is only one humanity." Badiou makes it clear, however, that he wants the concept subtracted of its humanist associations. He defines humanity as "that which provides support to the generic or truth procedures…[It] is the historical body of truths ("What is Love" 184). He derives the existence of a humanity through the rather self-proving logic that if (noumenal) beings could be subjectivized (made into subjects by a generic procedure) then it "attests that the humanity function exists" (184). Note that Badiou establishes the existence of a singular humanity not by enumerating positive characteristics that transcend the sexual disjunction but by the very process of subjectivization itself. For Badiou, although the "humanity function" is shared by the Two positions it cannot be an object of knowledge. It is "present" but not presented, a "subtraction." Badiou's fourth axiom thought in conjunction with the first three creates a paradox that is precisely what love as a form of thinking seeks to address. The first three axioms suggest that truths are sexuated while the fourth axiom suggests that love is truly a *generic* procedure for it addresses only one humanity (and not a

specific sexualized position). If the two positions, M and W, are absolutely disjunct then it seems to follow that truths are sexualized as well (read: there exists a masculine and feminine art/ politics/ love/ science). This is the kind of division that someone like, say, Luce Irigaray might endorse (Hallward 189). How then can Truths be transpositional given this fundamental disjunction? Badiou's response: Love is precisely a process that thinks through this paradox. "Love does not relieve that paradox; it treats it" ("What is Love" 186). Love then is itself the paradox that it treats.

Reading Literature with Badiou

If what Badiou has to say about love *feels* insufficient it is probably because his discussion is more concerned with providing a formal structure of love rather than what that structure might contain. Indeed, for such a method of approaching the topic of love, Terry Eagleton says: "Badiou speaks of love as though it is a self-evident experience, which may be true for Parisians but not for the rest of us" (*Figures* 252). Peter Hallward comments that it "comes as no surprise that Badiou has had less to say…about love than about the other generic procedures," for in "the case of love…such truth is private by definition" (185). Also, since love is, for Badiou, fundamentally the "truth of the disjunction" it cannot be an object of knowledge: "the experience of the loving subject…does not constitute any knowledge of love" (*Conditions* 182).

It is my conviction—in the spirit of Badiou, who often justifies claims via the force of conviction—that literature may provide clarificatory material to the very formal procedure of love that Badiou outlines. It is by sheer chance that I came upon the passage that I am going to analyze, and I have the randomness of Google to thank.[2] The passage is from Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* (1989). I think it beautifully articulates, both as content and as "subtraction", Badiou's ideas on love.

Have you ever been in love? Horrible isn't it? It makes you so vulnerable. It opens your chest and it opens up your heart and it means that someone can get inside you and mess you up. You build up all these defenses, you build up a whole suit of armor, so that nothing can hurt you, then one stupid person, no different from any other stupid person, wanders into your stupid life…They did something dumb one day like kiss you or smile at you and then your life isn't your own anymore. Love takes hostages. (Gaiman)

What one immediately notices in the passage is that although it speaks of love there is nothing specifically said about the loved object. No idealization occurs. In fact, we are given almost nothing about the loved object aside from the fact that "she" is a "stupid person, no different from any other stupid person."[3] A word of caution: "stupid" here is not to be understood as idiotic (although it could partially carry that meaning), for then it would simply operate as a regulative marker within the order of being, a way to classify and categorize elements in a Situation. Rather, "stupid" in this context suggests a person subtracted of any accidental feature or characteristic where desire could attach itself, a person in "her" stupid reality, as opposed to "her" tolerable (yet barred, in the Lacanian sense of the term) Symbolic identity. Subtracted of those

accidental features to which desire aims, what remains is the other in his or her stupid reality. Love does not erase the problem of sexual difference; rather, it is testament to the truth of the absolute disjunction of the amorous Two.

Note also that the passage distinguishes between love and desire—that is, love does not have the *objet a*, the object of desire as its cause—while also resisting presenting love as a way of manufacturing an intimate knowledge of the other. Badiou insists that love is not an experience of the other, but an experience of the situation "under the post-evental condition that there were Two" (*Conditions* 182). Consequently, it leaves the reader with a sense that love is precisely the absence of a relation, and calls attention to the fundamental gap that separates the amorous subjects. Further, note how the object of love just "wanders" into one's existence, unanticipated and unexpected. Gaiman represents love as a chance encounter! Its appearance cannot be predicted or calculated within the order of Being, for it is a "disruptive occurrence" (*Infinite* 20).

It also is important to highlight the aleatory nature of the encounter to fully appreciate Badiou's contribution to the thinking of love. The passage states that the amorous other just haphazardly "wanders" into one's life. Love is not *represented* as a choice but as, to use •i•ek's phrase, "a forced choice."[4] Also, is not the mention of erecting "defenses" and donning a "suit of armour" an allusion to the operations of the State of the Situation? The State bars the "phantom remainder" from haunting the Situation so that humans *counted as One* of its elements may harbor illusions of security at the expense of their immortality, their relation to the infinite. Gaiman's passage beautifully and clearly renders Badiou's ontological Faustian bargain.

The prior relationship between two beings as designated by the structure of a particular (ordered) situation (defined by terms such as co-workers, classmates, neighbors, friends, strangers, etcetera) will have no bearing on the love that, upon their declaration, will confer to them both the status of subject. Love, for Badiou, creates new worlds! Long time friends and perfect strangers are both equally suitable candidates to become subjects of love (for as a "generic procedure" love is open to all!). What matters is that the Two recognize the sudden emergence of the amorous event, and that they courageously declare its existence. The declaration makes love legible within the order of being, and its presence is what grants the amorous Two agency, making them proper subjects. To act out of love means that the subject is not acting from the position of the One (which the state of the situation designates), but from the perspective of the Two. Needless to say, the emphasis on the contingency of the amorous encounter makes this passage an apt *representation* of Badiou's understanding of love (I put emphasis on "representation" to indicate that this literary fragment is not consubstantial with an Event—in the way that, say, for Badiou, the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé constitutes an Event in the domain of Art—but rather only a symbolic enactment of it, a mere scene of *re*-presentation).

At this point, allow me to introduce a possible complication. The mention of "opening up", "tak[ing] hostages", and "smile" (metonymically, the face) alludes to a Levinasian vocabulary. I suggest that it would be a mistake to read this passage as an

articulation of Levinasian ethics. The encounter dramatized here is not an encounter with the "face of the other" that binds the subject to a pre-ontological and infinite responsibility towards it. The speaker, as I have mentioned above, does not directly talk about the other (if anything, the speaker alludes to their fundamental disconnection), but rather, talks about love itself. The speaker suggests a responsibility, albeit hesitant, to the amorous-Event rather than a responsibility to the loved object. This responsibility towards the amorous encounter is nothing more than the fidelity to the Event. Suffice it to recall Badiou's attempt to "preserve the word *ethics*" by reconfiguring it as an "ethic of truth," a tenacious relation to Truth wherein you "do all you can to persevere in that which exceeds your perseverance" (*Ethics* 47).

A conclusion without concluding, or why parting is such sweet sorrow

I have always thought that writing about love is a lot like falling in love. It consumes your waking days and nights. The experience is full of excitement, possibility, promise, awe, even desire. You begin to find it in every corner of your life: it greets you "Good morning;" accompanies you to lunch; finds its way into daily conversation (make sure to be in the company of very patient ears). It does not seem to need rest for it waltzes into your dreams, a witness to Oedipal screenings (love after all is said to be a creature of the night). It takes its time (and thus this paper was submitted two weeks after the agreed deadline). And it has a weird way of making you enjoy those moments when it is frustratingly demanding, cryptic, uncooperative. The wonderful feeling of amorous pain and anxiety!

But like a lover who always feels that his labours of love are inadequate to show his beloved the depths of his feelings, I feel that this paper is incomplete and insufficient, and in many ways it truly is. Passionate ebbs and flows: there are as many ambitious moments as there are uninspiring ones, as many creative explosions as there are duds. There are "flashes, formulas, surprises of expression" that make my heart swell with pride and joy and love; and to which I have an inexplicable passionate attachment —a way an idea is phrased, the way a sentence flows, the way a paragraph develops a thought. But there are moments of bland explication and uninspired imbecility that make my superego say in sadistic glee: "Is this the best you've got?!"

What I have attempted to show in these pages is that both Jean-Luc Nancy and Alain Badiou suggest that the gap between two singularities where love emerges, the domain of so much joy, pleasure, pain and anxiety is also a domain of thought. It should not mandate the banishment of thought, but rather open up possibilities for its future. But I make these claims without presumption. I turn to Nancy and Badiou to make my argument, but I do so opportunistically, because I perhaps recognize my own experience in their words (or perhaps I superimpose my own experience on their words). For better or worse, this paper will inevitably contain my own stories of love: intimate expressions masquerading as general theory. My only hope is that perhaps you will find fragments of your own love stories in these pages.

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FOOTNOTES

1 For example, Michael Hardt suggests that love needs to be cleansed of its Oedipal content, while Alain Badiou suggests that love has to be reconceptualized without the concepts of fusion and ablation.

i) The Gaiman passage came up when I searched for "quotes on love" using Google. Why did I search love on Google? For purely scholarly reasons, I assure you. Of course, needless to say, I do not speak for my unconscious.

ii) I use scare quotes on "she" (and on "her" in the rest of the explication of the passage) to indicate that the loved object occupies the position W and does not necessarily indicate a biological or social reality.

iii) n *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, •i•ek writes: "The paradox of love is that it is a free choice, but a choice that never arrives in the present—it is always already made. At a certain moment, I can only state retroactively that *I've already chosen*" (166).

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IMPLICATIONS OF SARTRE'S HUMANISTIC EXISTENTIALISM

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Introduction

The philosopher who lies at the heart of this work is Jean-Paul Aymand Sartre, a key figure in the philosophy of existence (existentialism) and phenomenology, and one of the leading figures in the 20th century philosophy. He was a French philosopher, playwright, novelists, political activist, biographer and literary critic. He was born in Paris as the only child of Jean-Baptiste Sartre, an officer of the French Navy and Anne-Marie Schweitzer. His mother was of Alsatian origin and the first cousin of Nobel Prize laureate Albert Schweitzer.

Sartre became attracted to philosophy upon reading *Henri Bergson's* Essay*, Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness.* However, the most decisive influence on Sartre's philosophical development was his weekly attendance at Alexandre Kojeve's seminars, which continued for a number of years. Sartre died on April 15, 1980.

As a philosopher, Sartre's philosophy lent itself to his being a public intellectual. He envisaged culture as a very fluid concept; neither pre-determined, nor definitely finished; instead, in true existential fashion, "culture was always conceived as a process of continual invention and re-invention" (Being and Nothingness 96). This marks Sartre, willing to move and shift stance along with events. He did not dogmatically follow a cause other than the belief in human freedom, preferring to retain a pacifist's objectivity. It is this overarching theme of freedom that makes his work subverts the bases for distinctions among the disciplines.

His novel philosophy is his humanistic existentialism where he over-emphasized the theme of human freedom. For him, once freedom's light is beacon in a man's heart, the gods become powerless against him. Man, then is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. In other words, for Sartre, everything has been figured out for man, except how to live his life. It is this Sartrean humanistic existentialism with absolute freedom as its central theme that is the cause of this work. Our aim is to source out the implications of holding such a position in a world where man is not a beast living for itself alone but living in the community with multiplicity of other subjects. But before we proceed to do this we need to examine in details Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism.

Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism

To render this paper intelligible, let us begin by examining what Humanism is. In his book *The New Humanism,* Udo Etuk sees humanism as "one of the major systematic philosophies in the history of civilization" (5). He posits two senses in which humanism can be understood as a philosophy namely, humanism as "a view of life" and humanism as "a human activity or enterprise". Since humanism "claims to be and to present the correct and integrated view of the universe and of man's place in it", he rightly concludes that it is a systematic philosophy (6-7).

For the purpose of this paper we will adopt Corliss Lamont's position as quoted by Etuk in his work *The New Humanism.* He writes:

> Humanism is the view point that men have but one life to lead and should make the most of it in terms of creative work and happiness; that human happiness is its own justification and requires no sanction or support from supernatural sources; that in any case the supernatural, usually conceived of in the form of heavenly gods or immortal heavens, does not exist; and that human being, using their own intelligence and cooperating liberally with one another, can build an enduring citadel of peace and beauty upon this earth (9-10).

Humanism like existentialism is a philosophical attitude which can be seen in many world-views such as theism, naturalism, transcendentalism, etc. though incorporated in some systems of philosophies and world-views, humanism expresses some vague dissatisfaction with them and a firm determination that human values and potentialities should not be swallowed up in a system that either takes no account of man or that makes him something less than he truly is. Like existentialism, humanism is absolutely man-centered.

Humanistic existentialism stands for the dignity, the rights and the freedom of man. It spurns any philosophy or theology which squeezes man into categories or systems that rob him of his humanity. In its defense of human dignity, humanism takes the following extreme positions: firstly, humanistic existentialism vehemently opposes any form of determinism, theistic or naturalistic. It holds that man cannot be completely subject to the physical law.

Humanistic existentialism also holds that man is not subject to any moral imperatives except those he prescribes for himself. Any other law, whether from above or below which he has not made by himself, enslaves him and robes him of his human dignity.

It is on this ground that humanistic existentialism rejects all forms of the natural-law theory or the divine law theory and recognizes only the concept of law advocated by social utilitarianism.

Thirdly, humanistic existentialism asserts that man's future is to some extent undetermined and open inspite of the natural and historical forces beyond man's control. Thus the humanists believe that man is not merely a helpless victim of history but a maker of history. Man's future is dependent on his everyday choices. Man

becomes what he makes himself not what God or nature may have programmed him to become.

Humanistic existentialism as we have seen above, both implicitly and explicitly dismisses the idea of a creator God. It argues that if man is a creature of God, he cannot but be subject to God's will as a pot is subject to the will of the potter. It then holds that if man exist and be free, the idea of God must be rejected. Thus humanistic existentialism concludes that theistic authoritarianism is destructive of man's humanity and dignity; it deprives man of his freedom of choice, limits his possibilities and imposes an alien law on him.

Humanistic existentialism also rejects naturalism because of its unacceptable materialism and determinism. Man's freedom cannot be compromised with the law-like regularity with which natural processes seem to occur. Man is free. He can make a difference in the course of events. Man has an open future; he is not determined by natural laws and forces. He has within his power to change the course of history.

With regard to the historical antecedent of humanistic existentialism, the idea of humanistic philosophy as "man centered" mostly evolved from Pico's famous *Oration on the Dignity of Man,* (1492), but its full articulations in the 19th Century is seen in Ludwig Feuerbach's The *Essence of Christianity* (1841) in which he argued that religion was nothing more than the projection of the noblest aspirations of humans. He concluded that the proper study of the philosopher and the theologian is not what transcends man but *man* himself and his values.

The strain of humanistic philosophy continued with Frederick Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God in modern culture in his analysis of the existential situations of humans as beings in the world.

In his *Existentialism Is a Humanism* (1946), Jean-Paul Sartre argued that "existence precedes essence" and consequently there is no human nature, no God. Man is what he makes himself, man is how he acts. Man's humanity consist in self-determination.

With humanistic existentialism, especially as put forward by Heidegger, Sartre, Camus and Simone de Beavour, the question of man's destiny becomes for the first time all-important, for nothing is settled and everything matters. What one will make of himself is left open. God has not defined it for man, it is man who defines it for himself. Humanistic existentialism makes everybody responsible for everything. Man's dignity stems not from having being given a favoured place in the universe but for the fact that while his existence is contingent, his life is his own creation.

In proclaiming existentialism as humanism, Sartre distinguishes two meanings of humanism. He rejected the first one which, as a theory, "upholds man as the end-in-itself and as the supreme value." He regarded this form of humanism as absurd because, according to him, man cannot be an end since he is still to be determined.

With regard to the other meaning of humanism in which sense existentialism is humanism Sartre has this to say:

> … the fundamental meaning is this: man is all the time outside of himself: it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and on the other hand it is in pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist … There is no other universe, the universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity. This relation of transcendence as constitutive of man (… in the sense of self-surpassing) with subjectivity … it is this that we call existential humanism… this is humanism because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself; also because we show that it is not by turning back upon himself, but always by seeking, beyond himself … that man can realize himself as truly human (Existentialism 310).

This new humanism of /Sartre is what we have chosen to call humanistic existentialism in this work and is the subject of our critique. The contents of Sartre's humanistic existentialism which will be critically surveyed in this work include the following: the rejection of God's existence, of human nature and essence; his two modes of being; the precedence of existence over essence; his pessimistic view of inter-human relationship; his proclamation of man's absolute and unlimited freedom; his rejection of objective norms or moral codes and so on.

1.10.3 Subjectivity

A very important concept that Jean-Paul Sartre employed in the exposition of his humanistic existentialism is subjectivity. It is Sartre's belief that what all existentialists have in common is that existence precedes essence or that subjectivity must be the starting point in every philosophical enterprise.

Before Hegel, subjectivity was a pejorative notion, denoting a violation of the authoritative demands of the mind; in Hegel's philosophy it assumed a new meaning signifying "a rejection of misconceived objectivity and a reaffirmation of the unconditional decision of the subject" (Navickas 4). Kierkegaard employed the concept subjectivity as an answer to Hegel's abstractionism which denigrates the individual. For him, subjectivity is the very antithesis of philosophy which deals with abstract ideas. Thus Kierkegaard means by subjectivity a total, personal assimilation of Christianity as a unique mode of life. According to Kierkegaard a speculative philosopher examines the object of his thought in a totally impersonal and uninvolved manner, he is completely separated from the objects, and he merely looks or gazes at it or examines it. Such a philosophical speculation is what he called objectivity. On the other hand, subjectivity means the practicing and living of Christianity. For him, to exist is to be subjective. Man's subjectivity involves a decision. It involves self-affirmation and choice as well as responsibility for oneself.

For Jean-Paul Sartre, the primacy of existence is translated into the primacy of subjectivity and action. He says:

> Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing (Existentialism 291).

Sartre employed human subjectivity to protest against man's fixed or predetermined essence. The primacy of subjectivity, therefore, means that man makes

himself what he is. There is no definition for man other than the one he gives himself. As one defines himself, so will he be. We make ourselves what we are by a self-defining project.

Sartre's concept of subjectivity, which we will constantly come across in this study, consists in the assertion that no condition imposes itself on us without our subjective evaluation or estimation of that condition. Subjectivity as understood in Sartre's existentialism is further explained by Luijpen and Co. as:

> The aspect of man's reality by virtue of which he rises above being the blindly determined result of processes and forces (101).

Thus for Sartre, subjectivity means that man is a subject and not an object. He has a conscious subject capable of reflecting on his existence, making choices and of defining his future. He has no given essence. He is a "bundle of possibilities", a "conglomeration of potentialities," he is a project and is "always ahead of himself." He makes himself what he will become.

Sartre insists that being-subject means being-free, for through his subjectivity man rises above his being-a-thing. He says:

> Man is nothing else but that which he makes himself. That is the first principle of existentialism. And this is what people call its subjectivity … but what do we mean to say by this, but that man is of a greater dignity than a stone or a table? For we mean to say that man primarily exists- that man is … something that propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so. Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life … (Existentialism 291).

Sartre makes it very clear that his concept of subjectivity does not belong to the Cartesian subject. Lawler in his book *The Existentialist Marxism of Jean-Paul Sartre* summarizes the Sartrean concept of subjectivity as follows:

> Subjectivity is (I) the formal principle of conscious mediation of all situations, (2) the absence of objective determination in a world of possibilities without determinate meaning of its own, and (3) a deeper "layer" of consciousness that underlies and is manifested in the various particular that mostly occupy our attention (12).

Sartre's subjectivity and humanistic existentialism can be seen as a combination of three contemporary modes of thought stemming from Marx, Husserl and Heidegger who share in common their concern for man's active role in forging his own destiny. For them the human being reflects on his existence, takes a stance towards it, and moulds it in accordance with the fruits of such reflection. The human being is not fixed. He is, as Heidegger says " always ahead of himself", "always on the way" (67-69).

The Metaphysical Implications and Consequences of Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism

One of the primary projects of Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism was to rescue man from the impersonal, transcendental and abstract rationalism of traditional philosophy. To realize this project, Sartre launched his phenomenological ontology

which he adopted to restore the dignity of man which was lost in the transcendental and mystical metaphysics of the medieval philosophy.

A close look from the metaphysical plane reveals that Sartre did more harm to man and to metaphysics than god. Sartre's entire philosophy rests on a twofold option namely postulatory atheism and Husserl's postulate of a self-sufficient phenomenology. With the aid of the phenomenological method Sartre denies the existence of the invisible. He denied God, human nature or essence, the soul and the spirit, the ego and so on. With phenomenology appearance is reality.

Thus one of the metaphysical implications of Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism is his creation of another form of dualism in philosophy. His philosophy claimed to have ended the dualism of essence and appearance, an age long philosophical problem. But as Grimseley in his *Existentialist Thought* rightly observed, another dualistic problem remains after the end of the old dualism. He says:

> "Appearance" is not separated from "being" as formerly, but there still remains the problem of relating the single appearance which "is" now to the other appearances which it is not but to which it is indissolubly linked. Although the phenomenon has been reduced to the "appearance", the being of that appearance still remains to be clarified (91).

Another metaphysical implication of Sartre's view arising from his confinement of human existence to the one sphere of consciousness is his sad and painful stripping of the human ego of its ontological and psychological richness and vitality by reducing it to a mere *res cogitans* (Reinhardt 167). It will be very unfortunate to apprehend man as merely consciousness. Sartre's anthropological views are still limited as those of Descartes.

The acceptance of Sartre's ontological views will simply mean the rejection of traditional metaphysics. This is because in his phenomenological ontology Sartre dogmatically posited his own terms while rejecting the concerns of traditional metaphysics. He denied human nature, the distinction between being and its manifestation, substance and accidents, act and potency and the philosophy of essence. There is also Sartre's abuse of the traditional meaning of contingency, necessity, absurdity and facticity as well as his dogmatic and unproven postulation of the two modes of beings. No one can accept these unproven positions of Sartre without implicitly and explicitly dismissing traditional metaphysics and its primary concerns.

In Sartre's phenomenological ontology the being in itself lacks the qualities required to constitute consciousness. Being by nature inert and purposeless, it would not serve as a causal purposive agent in the production of a zone of subjectivity. Yet it is implied that everything happens as if being did give rise to nothingness as its primary project. Critics believe that for Sartre to banish this problem to the region of metaphysics is to confess his inability to face one of the most pressing issues of philosophy (Collins 62). It also implies that distinction between ontology and metaphysics provides him an escape route of hiding from critical inspection of the difficulties created by his theory of being.

Sartre ignored the central problem of philosophy viz, the question of being. He preoccupied himself with being-in-itself and being-for-itself to the detriment of being. He ignored the more basic proposition of Heidegger that being precedes existence. This is because without the open clearing of being on which man can stand to project himself, he cannot exist. Sartre's existentialism is blind to this priority of being and is thus accused by William Barret of being like the Cartesian thought, "locked up in the human subject" (248).

Sartre by refusing to participate in the preoccupation of modern philosophy: the question of how it is possible for the subject and object to be – the search for the truth of being and the root of man, was faithful to his new humanism which leaves man rootless (Barret 250). The implication of this terrible omission is that his Humanistic Existentialism which is a phenomenological analysis of the human existence devoid of an ontological foundation is nothing but a castle on the air.

In the opening pages of Sartre's major work *Being and Nothingness,* Sartre affirms that there are no meanings apart from those which are posited by man himself. This implies that there can be no problem lying beyond phenomenology concerning a possible relationship between human meanings and the meaning of being. This approach which, according to Roberts, may rest on a "gratuitous assumption" is a clue to Sartre's persistent conviction that the non-human in itself is simply meaningless (197-198).

There are many other metaphysical implications present in Sartre Humanistic Existentialism some of which have been criticized quite earlier but suffice it to say that Sartre's ontology is nothing but a mass of unproven dogmatic postulation which ignored the concerns of traditional metaphysics.

Religious Implications of Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism

The non-existence of God is to Sartre as necessary as breathing. It is a major stand sustaining his entire philosophical edifice. For Sartre if man is to be affirmed, God must be denied. His postulatory atheism is adopted to justify his claim of the absolute freedom of man. Without God freedom and responsibility are boundless.

We have earlier discussed the place of Sartre's atheism in his Humanistic Existentialism with some of the criticisms it has attracted since he took up this posture, here we will briefly look at some the unanswered problems raised by Sartre's atheism with their attendant consequences.

It must be initially pointed out that Sartre took the notion of "divine mind" quite literally and anthropomorphically as implying what his phenomenological investigation has uncovered concerning consciousness. As we pointed out above, consciousness is always that of something, hence there can be no "consciousness" apart from the world. This anthropomorphism misled Sartre to dismiss the doctrine of God's creation of the world out of nothing because this presupposes the existence of a subject (God) before there were objects. The difficulty arises because in Sartre's dogmatism the idea of consciousness which creates its objects contradicts the nature of consciousness (Roberts 214).

Sartre's major problem lies in his exclusion of other beings like God and the lower animals from possessing consciousness. Hence they are neither being-in-itself nor being-for-itself. Even in his trying to attribute consciousness to God he merely attributed human consciousness to God thus making it impossible to conceive Him (a being-for-itself) creating the world.

It is always implied in Sartre's entire thought, the notion of God who is within human sphere of being. A God who thinks and works like man in all things. Such a God cannot therefore account for the existence of all things. Thus Sartre's failure is in presuming that "whatever is true of human consciousness must be carried over unmodified into the connotations of the idea of God (Roberts 216).

Another fundamental difficulty of Sartre which led him to his postulatory atheism is that of reconciling belief in God with the existence of man's unlimited freedom. Sartre fell into the error of atheism because he thought there were only two alternatives. The first option for him is rationalism, which in trying to deduce existence from essence makes every existent dependent upon God thereby making determinism inescapable. This leads to the disappearance of freedom. The second option is atheism, which dismisses God and elevates man as a creator of values and endowed with absolute freedom.

What is really needed which Sartre fails to furnish is a definition of human nature which includes freedom instead of being "prior" to it. With such a definition we can say that man receives the power to be free from God and that his exercise of freedom is always a fulfillment or an abuse of this gift.

Judging from the fact that we cannot summarize our life on earth as that of anguish and the feeling of abandonment (feelings which emanate from the absence of God in the universe and the absolute freedom of man) Sartre's denial of God's existence becomes nothing but an illusion. The implication of such deceptive thought is the absurdity of human existence, which Sartre himself acknowledged.

If Sartre is sincere in his assertion that he is not happy about having to face life without divine help, that he finds it "very distressing that God does not exist" *(Existentialism 294)*; if he is being honest and not merely ironical in expressing this attitude, the implication is twofold. Firstly, it calls attention to the fact that if God is real, He communicates with man through inwardness, consciences, and decision. Secondly, it means that Sartre's ontology prompts him to make the mistake of thinking that human decision is the whole story. He assumes that the content of religious belief is nothing but projection not communication, but if the reality of God is compatible with freedom, "then Sartre's account of man's longing to be (like) God may take on a quite different significance" (Roberts 219).

A fundamental religious implication of Sartre's entire Humanistic Existentialism is nothing but the abolition of religion which he sees as alienating man from his freedom and responsibility. For Sartre as well as Nietzsche and Marx belief in God is the worst enemy of man's freedom, and if man is to be liberated, the idea of God and nature must be abolished. It is only when this is done that man will be abreast with his

freedom and its attendant responsibility. It is only at this stage that man can be delivered from bad faith.

If there is no God man's religious sentiments becomes empty. Man can no longer retain the status of a religious being. Praying to God, going to church as well as other religious obligations will simply be abolished. This implication of Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism has drastic far reaching consequences on man's life in the world.

A Sociological Critique of Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism

It is an indisputable stand of traditional philosophy that man is a social being. This position is commonly justified by experience. The human being needs the presence of others to make his world a better place and to live a fulfilled life.

In the light of this indisputable truth, it becomes very embarrassing to see Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy which regards itself not only as existentialist but also as 'humanistic" denying this social dimension of human existence. Sartre's humanistic existentialism is a philosophy on a rescue mission – out to liberate man from the clutches of abstract philosophizing that has swallowed it up along the centuries. One can rightly affirm without fear of falling into any error that the extreme pessimistic view of Sartre's social theory has made his philosophy an enemy of man's life in the world.

Sartre's social theory has been roundly criticized above in the section of Being-for-others. He summarized inter-human relations as marked by conflict and not co-operation. Man beholds the presence of the other as alienating and murderous and this creates in him fear, shame and hatred.

Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism sociologically is enslaving and not liberating. It sets the philosophical hand of the clock too backward. One striking feature of this social theory is that it moves from the twentieth century philosophy not forward to the twenty-first century but back to the seventeenth century.

Sartre's theory very much resembles that of the seventeenth century English philosophy, Thomas Hobbes. For Hobbes, in his social contract theory, man is a wolf to men. All men are enemies in "the state of nature" and therefore some kind of "contract" is needed to bring men together in the society by a sovereign who institutionalizes all force. This is also the view of Sartre. It is right, therefore, to say that Sartre's social theory is Hobbesian.

In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* where Sartre outlines his sociological position there is an apparent repetition of Hobbes position and a reaffirmation of Sartre's pessimistic view of human relations present in *Being and Nothingness*. Namely: the view that there is no real community between men. Man's relations are either "sadistic" or "masochistic" and every man is somehow the enemy of everyone else. Sartre's sociological theory is too far behind that of Marx, the only new thing he introduced n the *Critique* is the notion of social contract upheld by force and this is nothing but a repetition of what Hobbes was saying in the seventeenth century.

The extreme individualism of Sartre runs quite against our daily experience of man's social life where man co-operates with others fraternally to achieve some specific

goals. We witness the indispensable co-operation in various areas of human endeavours in industry, in civil service, in sports, in family life and so on. Sartre's social theory will have the consequence of that of Hobbes in which human life is solitary, brutish and short.

Sartre's introduction of the social contract upheld by force to prevent security risk consequent upon such state of nature will have the implication of dealing a deadly blow to his theory of unlimited freedom. With the social contract man is no longer absolutely free, his freedom is restricted so as to prevent him from being a threat to the existence of others.

If, as we saw earlier, Sartre's social theory excludes the possibility of community life, of love and friendship and of good language and desire, it then means that his Humanistic Existentialism will have no place in African social milieu where communalism, solidarity and brotherhood are the basis of man's life with others. In the African context it is asserted that a tree cannot make a forest, the individual is because there is the community. His existentialism also has no place in Christianity where the acceptable social life is that built on selfless love which for Sartre is impossible and is an effort geared towards futility.

Sartre's Humanistic Existentialism also dealt a blow in man's social life by asserting that human existence is lived in bad faith. Man's public life is, for Sartre, marked by self deception whereby he is constantly denying his boundless freedom and responsibility. This again implies that man's social life is fake, it is never his real life. This goes on to corroborate his firm stand that human existence is absurd, it is not worthy living, it is a miserable state. This cannot be true of the life we are all enjoying and are doing everything to prolong.

Finally we can say that Sartre's sociology is quite unrealistic of the human existence we all partake. It is a deceptive social theory that presents a chaotic society where everyone is trying to objectify the other, a society where there is no love and friendship, Sartre's view stands against reason and experience.

Ethical Implications of Sartre's Absolute Freedom

It is true that Sartre never intended his major work *Being and Nothingness* to be a book on morality but most of his assertions on man's unlimited freedom contained in this book has more moral implications than most ethical books. This aspect of his Humanistic Existentialism has attracted more questions and condemnations from critics than any other aspect. This led Sartre to promise in a footnote in *Being and Nothingness* to write another book "on an ethical plane". This promise was never fulfilled. His essay *Existentialism Is a Humanism* written in 1946 is sometimes taken to be the definitive statement of his moral views though it is itself full of many unanswered questions. Many critics have found glaring deficiencies in Sartre's ethical positions. These consequences of his interpretation of human freedom "begets an area of confusion and gratuitous assumptions" (Lescoe 323).

A critical look at Sartre's affirmation of man's absolute freedom and is repudiation of all conceptions of human nature show the link between this and the rejection of the

very influential tradition of ethical thought which grounds moral values in human nature. And once moral values are not grounded in human nature and are denied any supernatural foundation in a divine plan, the implication becomes that in Sartre's view judgments of moral value have no objective content at all. They can simply be interpreted as "expressions of choices or preferences' (Baldwin 290).

The anti-naturalistic positions of Sartre in his essay *Existentialism is a Humanism* corroborate this interpretation of Sartre. He says:

> If God does not exist, are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimize our behaviour. Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse (295).

Prior to this saying, Sartre had said that choosing between things is to affirm the value of that which is chosen for we always choose good and not evil (Existentialism 291-193). The above positions which are central to Sartre's position presents Sartre's ethics as a version of "emotivism" or "prescriptivism" according to which judgment of value are essentially expressive or prescriptive and not descriptive (Baldwin 290).

If man is his own measure in the absence of an objective moral standards, if he alone invents values, if he is his own legislator as Sartre says, where then can we find the sound foundation for civilized community living? This problem raised by Sartre's unrestrained individualism and his absolute freedom cannot simply be dismissed by saying that the man who chooses for himself is also responsible for all men. To choose to commit himself is the same as to choose to be a legislator for mankind.

It is very embarrassing to see Sartre jumping from affirming his own freedom to affirming that of others. He had earlier shown the impossibility of this. He has denied the existence of human nature on which one could have based the assumption that what is good for one individual is good for men generally. Sartre's view of interpersonal relations is that of egoism and conflict where the "we-feeling" is represented primarily as a threat to freedom. How can Sartre then justify his transition to a position that fellowship and love can become "the fruition instead of the frustration of freedom" (Roberts 223)? We can also ask how we can know what is good for all men since there is no objective standard of measurement but every individual is creating his own value. How can we known the value of others?

Critics have also insistently asked whether man is really good and benevolent enough to be entrusted with such a task. If all choose different values freely and honestly on the same moral issue can one rightly accuse any of wrong doing? If, for example, one man judges tax evasion to be wrong and another to be right can we take the first man's judgment to be a good moral judgment and make it an objective moral standard? What can we say of the other man's honest and free judgment? The implications of Sartre's position are multiple and deeper investigation exposes Sartre's difficulty and the confusion in his ethical positions consequent on his position of man's unlimited freedom.

In his attack on conventional ethics, Sartre singles out for special attention what he calls "the spirit of seriousness" which is a form of bad faith. According to him,

this attitude pretends that the difference between right and wrong has already been settled axiomatically, so that no kind of creative ethical venturing is necessary. The implication of this position of Sartre is nothing but a rejection of universal moral standard. For him there are no objective moral standards binding man in the performance of his actions. Man is free to decide what he likes faced with particular situations. He tried to argue this with the example of a young man faced with the dilemma of looking after his mother in occupied France and leaving to join the Resistance in England. He concluded by saying there is no apriori moral standard that can help the young man resolve his dilemma. Sartre must have gone too far in thinking that the existence of general moral principles means they must be applied in every particular circumstance even where they are irrelevant. Objective moral principles are only available to assist man in making moral decision to compliment the dictates of his freewill.

Mary Warnock in her book *Existentialism* maintains that Sartre's Existentialism together with other Existentialist thoughts made no contribution to moral philosophy. Criticizing Sartre's essay *Existentialism Is a Humanism,* she said the essay did not meet the objection raised above that there could be no such thing as an existentialist morality, if all that man can do is to evaluate the world for himself alone. She also faulted the superficial Kantian moral theory it contained since (as Sartre himself later realized and regretted the publication) it is quite impossible to envisage "the true existentialist man taking responsibility for anyone's choice but his own", or adopting the Kantian position that men are to be treated as ends in themselves. To take this view is to be guilty of "the spirit of seriousness" or bad faith (125). She therefore concluded that this essay cannot be a proper statement of Sartre's moral philosophy or that of Existentialism in general.

Even at the end of *Being and Nothingness* the implications of Sartre's positions on freedom and responsibility led him to an impasse. Any attempt to present an ethics with any generality will be nothing but "the spirit of seriousness" or bad faith. The one established fact is that values were personal, contingent and chosen by the individual for himself alone. Thus there are no absolute values or inalienable rights for these express bad faith (Warnock, Existentialism 129).

Faced with this chaotic social and moral impasse the only way open to Sartre's existentialism is advocating that each man must save himself by choosing his own life of freedom. This appears to be the sad end of Sartre's ethical theory.

Sartre's ethical position has been massively criticized for its deficiencies and provocative assertions. James Collins analyzes the implications of Sartre's brand of freedom. He says:

> Freedom is here reduced to spontaneity … Condemnation to freedom would then mean not only that one cannot avoid acting freely and well by the very fact of initiating any project with resoluteness and afore thought … Sartre realized that an unqualified acceptance of this view will lead to a glorification of power displayed for its own sake (82).

Reviewing the Sartrean ethics, F. H. Heinemann in his book *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament* finds Sartre's interpretation of man's freedom inadequate

and incomplete. According to him the Sartrean man is completely free of the influence of emotions and passions. This, his man becomes a would-be creator who becomes only naturally responsible and not morally responsible. This interpretation of course begets total irresponsibility (127). Commenting on Sartre's assertion that "The most atrocious situations in war, the worst tortures do not create an inhuman state of affairs (Being 639), Heinemann says:

> This statement reveals the confusion, not only of this writer, but of our time. It seems irresponsible … because it implies a justification of the most cruel actions of the most inhuman dictators (128).

John Wild criticizes Sartre's deficient view of human existence. In his book *The Challenge of Existentialism,* he contends that though Sartre has not written his promised book on Ethics his ethical directions is already clear in outline from. He says:

> We may describe this as an ethics of pure freedom man has no constant tendencies. There are no changeless norms, to which he can look for guidance of his conduct …. Whether I decide to die for justice or drink at a bar, the matter is indifferent… Liberty itself is the only stable norm (164-165).

For Walter Odajnyk the Sartrean man is usurping the prerogative of God whom Sartre has denied. Since he creates his own essence and creates values for himself and for others Odajnyk says he is a God "but a God chained; he is condemned to make these decisions," he can't escape his role to play God, a choice he had not made himself (13).

Frederick Copleston in the same view refers to Sartre's ethical doctrine as a "philosophy of atomic individualism," wherein the individual's choice alone creates values. He says:

> If by "atomic individualism" we mean the doctrine that there is no universally-obligatory moral law and no values which are not created by the individual's choice, Sartre's philosophy is obviously a philosophy of atomic individualism (194-95).

Since it is the individual who creates values whether for himself or for others, Copleston contends that should another individual in all sincerity refuse to assume this social responsibility (by making capricious choice his value) one must admit that his choice is not worse than the first man's choice; they are both equally valid within Sartre's doctrine.

In trying to save his position on freedom and ethics from being charged with a reckless libertarianism Sartre insisted that thought the individual in making his choice is not responsible to any authority divine or human or to traditional values, he should not in exercising his freedom violate the freedom of others. This has the implication that man does not exercise absolute freedom as Sartre had taught.

Helmunt Kuhn takes Sartre up on this point asserting that Sartre in saying so is abandoning his existentialist position. He says that in decreeing that the individual man must respect the freedom of others, Sartre is really appropriating the Kantian principle that man can never be used as a means he is always an end (158-159).

Conclusion

From what has been revealed above and many other deficiencies of the Sartrean Ethical theory one can say that Sartre offered moral philosophy more problems than solutions. Any attempt to solve these problems within the Sartrean phenomenological analysis of human existence will be a fruitless effort. It will entail a total rejection of Sartre's entire philosophical edifice from his atheism to his doctrine of existence and essence, the two modes of being, inter-human relationship and his doctrine of absolute freedom. It is within this reasoning that one understands why Sartre never wrote his proposed work on Ethics – it will mean discarding all his previous philosophical doctrines.

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The role of sociality in deciding the morality involved in personal and professional relationships: with special reference to Indian culture

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Introduction

Generally, the word 'morality' is explained in terms of the codes of conduct proposed by a society and the moral norms set by a rational person. There is no exact definition for the term 'morality.' The word 'morality' in this context means what one ought to aim for, what sorts of obligations he or she should fulfill, what sorts of rights he/she is entitled to have etc. It concerns a person's goals or values, virtues or desirable qualities of character, obligations or duties and rights or justifiable claims (Prasad and Chattopadhyay, 2008). Defining moral norms always varies from one society to another and one culture to another. According to Parish, 'moral expereince' has social and cultural dimensions (2014). Similarly, religion has a significant effect on individual's opinion on moral issues (Finke and Adamczyk, 2008). Regarding personal relationships, morality is how one ought to act and what the right course of action is to one's parents, relatives, teachers, friends, spouse, fans etc. in a social set up, and in a professional relationship it is how one ought to act towards one's employer, colleagues, clients etc. Accordingly, one has various kinds of obligations – to respect one's parents, one's spouse, to take care of one's children and general obligations- such as the obligations to tell the truth, the obligation not to steal etc. (Kellenberger 2004). The author continues stating that the form of various sorts of obligations to particular persons is determined or clarified by the relationships that exist between people.

There are societies, where morality is deeply rooted in 'sociality' and it is reflected in almost all relationships (for example: rural Indian society). In such situation, morality depends on the religion, caste, class and other existing social institutions of the society in question. Here, society means a relatively independent, self-perpetuating human group which occupies a territory, shares a culture and has most of its association within the group (Horton and Hunt 2004). Though it is more prevalent among rural community members, there are members from urban communities who also behave in a similar way. Every human being possesses 'sociality' or the tendency to associate with others as one of the members in a society. In that context, an individual's major motivation behind being moral is the tendency of being sociable. This tendency has great significance in a collective society.

Indian society is collectivistic and promotes social cohesion and interdependence (Chadda and Deb, 2013). There are differences from individualistic-oriented cultures associating more frequently rights-based features and collectivistic-oriented cultures more frequently associating duty-based attributes (Vauclair, Wilson and Fischer, 2014). Often members follow the rights and wrongs of their group considering it their duty. This can be supported by the view that co-present moral spheres always exist in an organically complex society as mentioned by Durkheim, cites Kenny (2015). It helps to maintain social harmony and avoid 'offended' feelings by other group members. It has been reported that many western women externalize certain norms of Muslim societies, such as wearing 'hijab' when they travel, to avoid offence (Brennan, 2013). Also research supports the idea that there is a psychological tendency for human beings to be motivated largely by social influence (Adler 1979). Similar research points out showing or commenting morally by an individual among his/her concerned group members makes the former feels that he/she is actually moral(Simpson and Harrell, 2013). This sociality forces one to worry about others while following or rejecting any norms. The thought which automatically comes to people's mind, is 'what would others think?' It is common among rural Indian community and this thought works as a standard for deciding 'ought's and 'ought not's' in relationships. Relationships and morality are related because the former clarify or determine the individual forms of the obligations we recognize. Every relationship engrosses certain obligations.

There are various possibilities of relationship between two people. The two levels of relationship which are taken into account in this article are personal and professional level between individuals and the society. The author does not discuss general relationship, for example relationship between two individuals travelling in the same bus or between a manufacturer and a customer. The term 'relationship' is taken to mean an involvement between two people based on love or caring or regular interactions which may be regulated by law or custom or mutual agreement and requires commitment (Clement, 2011) . Regarding morality in a professional relationship, the author mainly focuses on individuals working under an employer or group of employers. Here, issues related to two types of professionals are discussed: those who work as actors/actresses in films and teachers in higher educational institutes.

Social stratification and morality

A society where 'sociality' plays a significant role, defines morality in accordance with gender, religion, money, power, age, locality and profession etc. Also research shows that cultural heterogeneity has a significant influence on a person's actual behavior (Harding, 2007). Related to the societal systems, gender plays a significant part in deciding moral standards. For example, in a patriarchal society, moral obligations are specified for women more than men, such as, females who obey elders are considered as 'good.' It includes accepting the social norms like 'elders in the family decide a girl's

marriage.' In some cases 'girls are not allowed to talk or laugh loudly in front of the elders', 'wives are not allowed to call their husband by name', 'cooking is considered as the duty of women', 'husbands take the privilege of abusing their wives' and so on. Singh reports in The Times of India on November 02, 2014 that Indian women have hardly any say in decision making. In most cases the moral obligations of a female are fixed by other male members in her family or society and thus female members lose the right to choose for themselves the rights and wrongs. A research shows that the family roles of men and women have not changed much (Gere and Helwig, 2012). Morality and identity are interactive (Paniagua, 2014). Moreover, there is submission on the part of a woman to a man particularly with regard to rights over her sexuality (Jongwilaiwan and Thompson, 2011). The fear of losing this submission might be the reason for preferring the practice of a man marrying a woman who is younger than him, not elder to him and if any woman chooses the other way, society does not approve. Women follow these norms and do not dare to challenge, because they want to be part of the group, though the trend is gradually changing now. It is pointed out that unlike males who make rigid moral judgments, females often consider the interest and commitment to the good of others close to them (Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Instances of unethical control by elders in the family of a woman or a local panchayath group (which consists of members who are men) over the rights of women and girls are also part of ensuring and perpetuating this submission. It has been reported that a khap panchayat in Haryana (one of the states in India) banned cell phones for unmarried girls to prevent them from eloping with young boys (The Indian Express, 2010). Eloping with a boy is considered as trespassing on the special rights of parents and elders to decide a girl's groom. Often the authorities do not interfere in this unethical social control. The major assumption is that these issues must be solved by caste leaders or panchayat and it is not part of legal system of the state, states Patel (2008), citing Chowdhry (1997). This unethical control of women in terms of 'morality' hinders women's progress. It is pointed out that gender and cultural norms in a society affect the ability of women to participate actively in groups (Mudege et al, 2015).

Religion or caste also plays an important role in deciding moral standards. Studies show that religion and morality are related (Nwosu, 2006) and the former has an effect on personal norms (Traunmuller, 2011) . People, who belong to religions that follow rigid principles, may strictly obey the attached moral rules and principles without checking the rationality behind their actions. Besides, morality varies according to the caste of a person. The moral standards for people belong to lower social strata are defined by the upper strata, for example, not allowing people who belong to a lower class/caste drink from the same wells, attend the same temple, wear shoes in the presence of upper caste or drink from the same cups in tea stalls etc. These social norms stem from the idea that people who belong to lower social strata are 'impure' or 'bad.' Darapuri reports on March 25, 2012 in The Hindu and another report in The Indian Express on September 04, 2013 that untouchability still exists in various parts of India. People do not question the irrationality behind these types of morality, which arise from the social norms. One who belongs to the lower strata simply follows these

because they fear the punishment of society or upper caste. Besides, an individual's blind faith does not allow him/her to support his/her belief with reason. For instance, there is a custom among a certain group of people, called 'made snana.' In that system, devotees (who belong to lower strata) roll over plantain leaves with leftovers of food had by Brahmins (upper caste). The major reason for doing this is the belief that they can be cleansed of their sins and only people who belong to the higher caste can clean the sins. The underlying assumption is that those who belong to the higher caste are 'pure.' Venkatesan reports on December 13, 2014 in The Hindu that the Supreme Court of India has banned the ritual saying that it is against morality. However, there are people, who really like to perform this ritual.

In contrast, in some localities minority groups are equally strong as the majority and the former like to maintain their own honour. Objecting to inter-caste/inter community marriage by both members from lower and higher strata is an exemplar for this. People think that by having inter-caste marriage they lose their honour in their society and so they commit honour killing to regain their honour. (Honour killing is the homicide of a member of a family or social group by other members, due to the belief of the perpetrators that the victim has brought dishonor or shame upon the family or community). Various reports show that it is still prevalent in modern India (The Hindu 2013; The Times of India 2013). Here, morality is defined in such a way that, to protect one group's (or family's) honour it is not wrong to kill the one who tried to dishonour the group (or family). Similarly, there is a difference between rich and the poor. If the rich deviate from the moral norms, the poor are reluctant to point it out and also the former does not mind at all. Citing Adam Smith (1976), Erappa (1996) points out that, in general ordinary people have stricter moral standards than the rich. These social strata play an important role in deciding 'morality' in both personal and professional relationships.

Explaining morality in personal relationships

Society often interferes in the setting up of individuals' moral standards, though a rational person is aware of the rights and wrongs of his/her actions. An individual is always conscious that he/she acts in social context (Stryker, 1980). Through the internal sanctions required for moral norms, the internal sanction is influenced by the membership in the society. The consciousness of being a member of a society plays an important role in deciding what ought to and what ought not be done by an individual. Generally, people seek a good 'social image' (may be unknowingly) in the community or in the group to which he/she belongs. 'Social image' is the views that others have of us and we take great care in presenting ourselves to others in ways that promote a positive impression (Mosquera, Uskul and Cross, 2011). To maintain the social image, it is required to behave in such a way which confirms the expectations of others. A study shows that when other group members expect an individual to act in a certain way that person's actual performance often conforms to those expectations (Kornblum, 2012). A person projects a certain character to the public or his/her society and obeying morality may be an effort to protect that same character. A society where morality is based on adaptability in the group praises such social image of a person by which one

never deviates from the societal norms. It is true that through their social interaction individuals construct moral judgments (Turiel 2002). Moreover, cultural expectations influence the moral behavior of people (Stets and Carter, 2012). Though the basic norms are absorbed as rational persons (for example caring for others), often people withdraw from wrong doings considering what others would think. Similarly they refuse to admit that certain action by other person is wrong if many do not consider it as wrong. For example, a group member does not consider child marriage as wrong or does not object openly to it, if the majority of his/her community members support it.

On the basis of sociality of morality, there are two types of personal relationships. The first is, (a) the relationship in which society does not question or talk about the morality involved, (because it is always considered to be moral), but specifies the moral obligations to be performed, and the second is, (b) that in which society sets moral standards in relationships. An example of the first type (a) is: parent(s)-child relationship. The moral obligation involved in this relation is care. The assumption is that parents, especially mothers, are of a caring nature. Society never doubts the morality involved in these relationships. However, the contradiction is that a relationship which is considered as moral becomes immoral because of the interference of cultural or religious rigidness of our society or the anti-social behavior of a person. In other words, there are mothers who sell their children for money and daughters for prostitution. Hume, Cohen and Sorvino (CNN, 2013), Warren (MAILONLINE, October 30, 2014) and the reports in news dailies (The Indian Express, November 27, 2014;The Times of India, September 9, 2014) confirm this fact. The father-daughter relationship is also not so decent because, there are fathers who harass their daughters physically or mentally. Related news is reported by Jha (The Times of India, Januray 14, 2014) and in India Today on May 19, 2014. In these cases, absence of moral obligations on the part of parent is the major reason for considering this relationship as indecent or immoral, though the latter is innocent. Here, human rights are not respected. There is a need to consider human rights as human freedom (Stevenson, 2014). Using violence (physical or mental or both) against children is taken as a special privilege by parents or elders. For instance, there are cultures (for example, UK (Blanchard 2015) and India (Borwankar 2015; Bhandary 2012)) where punishment such as smacking by parents is considered as not wrong if their children make any mistake or part of disciplining them. Even though the society keeps the moral norm that violence is wrong or 'one ought not to hurt others,' these kinds of violence are exempted in many cases. Society is reluctant to support the idea for the need to respect young ones by the elderly or the respect of juniors by the seniors or in an employment context respecting employees by the employer and so on.

In the second type of relationship, society specifies the standards in deciding an individual's ought and ought not's. For example: relationships between two unmarried males or females or between male and a female, society sets certain standards. For example, in India many people do not support homosexuality. It is illegal and considered as against moral law. Studies state that anti-homosexual societies with rigid gender roles believe that heterosexual relationships are the only appropriate ones (Ross,

1982). Another research shows that the narrative appeals with non-narrative appeals challenging ideas of homosexual relationship as inherently a religious issue are most likely to induce greater favourability toward homosexual relationship (Ghoshal, 2009) However, attitudes towards homosexuality are becoming slowly tolerant among women (Scott, 1998). Likewise, if a married young man/woman has a friendship with another unmarried woman/man, society decides the limit of closeness between the two. It does moral policing. It has been reported on February 14, 2015 in India Today, Gupta on February 3, 2015 in NDTV and in India News on May 14, 2015 that in certain societies unmarried males and females cannot assemble and cannot organize party or any function. A married woman should not have friends who are men and she is not allowed to go to a party or to the pub at night times. If any woman does so, people look at her as uncouth. It has been reported by Dutta on December 29, 2012 in The Hindu that people including a member of parliament (MP) questioned the morality of a rape victim who happened to be a married woman who visited a nightclub before the incident. Similar types of interference from society are seen in some professional relationships also.

Explaining morality in professional relationships

In certain professions 'sociality' influences the professionals. In professional relationships, the watchdog of morality is professional bodies or other agencies, not specifically the society. In a profession mainly three relationships exist – 'between employer and employee,' 'between two employees' and between 'employee(s)/ professionals and their clients.' In the employment context, employer can be a person, association, company or body. It is not necessarily an individual. The author discusses only the relationship between people. In an employment context, the company has the authority to determine the nature of relationship among its stakeholders. What ought to do and what ought not to do in the relationship is defined by one's company or employer. For example, sometimes the company policy states that dating among their employees is banned (e.g. Instagram). Dating is immoral according to the company. Regarding professional-client relationship, it is not necessary to have such relationship in all the professions. However, in certain professions, 'sociality' has a say. The two types of professional relationships which the society treats very differently are that of film actors/actresses and of teachers with regards to morality.

The 'oughts' and 'ought not's in these relationships are unusual. The society or viewers can be taken as a client(s) of the film field. (In this context a client(s) is defined as a person (or group of people) who uses the service of a professional person or persons). Actors and actresses enjoy certain special privileges and freedom regarding morality compared to others. For instance, society accepts with both hands the hugging or kissing between actors and actresses in the public place, but not between male or female politicians or between other professionals. The dress codes specified to other members in the society are not imposed on those who act in films. It has been reported by Bhagavati on October 03, 2014 in 'YOUTHKIAWAS' that 35% of the female characters are shown with some nudity and the members in the society enjoy it. A study points out of Indian films that 'characters in films judge women mostly on

physical and sexual terms, which in turn encourages the viewers to do the same in the real world' (Pal, 2014). Societal members adore the actors and actresses. Generally, society does not reject a film of an actor(s) for the reason that the actor(s) in the particular film did something immoral. For example, in an accident case a man was killed and four others were injured when an actor's car ran over the poor fellows who were asleep on a pavement. It was complained that while driving the actor was drunk. However, people still watch his movies and make them a success.

The profession in which society has a say is teaching profession. An interesting fact related to teaching profession in India is that not only employer has the authority to set ethical codes of conduct for teachers, but society also always keeps an eye on teachers' behavior and relationships. Teacher-student relationship is always treated as a sacred relationship. In India, even though teachers in higher educational institutes are not considered role models (like in lower education) by the students, romantic attraction between teacher and students, especially between female teachers and male students is not accepted by the society. The concept is that 'once a student, always a student or once a teacher, always a teacher.' However, romantic attraction between male teacher (mostly who is older) and a female student is accepted. There are male teacher- female student relations which ended up in successful marriages in India. Society considers the romantic relationship between an adult female teacher (who is older) and an adult male student is immoral. There is no logical reason for why the romantic relation between male teacher and female student is accepted but between female teacher and a male student is not accepted morally. Rationally, it matters only when the teacher has direct academic responsibility for the students, such as giving grade/mark to the student (Young, 1996). However, even though a male student leaves the institute after the completing his study, romantic attraction towards a female who was once his teacher is considered as immoral. That is to say, the standards, which are used to assess morality in personal relationship sometimes is used to assess relationship in one's professional life. The irony is despite the fact that in India teachers are considered as 'Gurus,' many cases of sexual harassment by male teachers in higher educational institutes have been reported (August 2014, The Hindu; October 2007, The Hindu; January, December 2013, The Hindu).

Conclusion

In brief, a society where 'sociality' plays a significant role in deciding morality, often shows a double standard in norms, on the basis of which the morality is assessed. Here, social norms are equated with moral norms. The result is defining morality on the basis of social stratifications. Moreover, even if a person has his or her own idea of rights and wrongs, the person acts on others' concept of rights and wrongs. It is influenced by the collective concept of do's and don'ts. If x believes that doing something is wrong, before proceeding further 'x' examines what others think about it. The collective opinion is given importance rather than individual opinion about the concept. This way the major definition of immorality for a person is 'anything which others think that I should not have done' is immoral. A person who is worried irrationally about what others will think, does not consider the consequences of his own actions,

how badly that affects others or whether the intention for doing certain action is justifiable or not. For social development, one needs the ability of inter-subjective engagement, which requires understanding the minds and intentions of others and then coordinating socially our behavior with others (Weisner, 2011). As human beings are moral agents, it is the duty of every one of us to respect each other whatever the relationship may be.

The problem with these types of thoughts is that this type of rigid morality affects the socio-economic growth and development of our society itself. It has been reported that India's economic rise coincides with moral change (Shafiq, 2015). All societies develop moral norms in favour of nonviolence, truthfulness, against killing, favouring love and harmony as a partial substitute for what would otherwise be hopelessly pervasive regulation aimed at getting people to behave in ways that may be of little or no direct benefit to them but nonetheless make everyone better off (Friedman 2006). However, tolerance (from all sides), social and economic mobility, fairness and democracy are vital aspects which should be embraced with the sociality of moral norms. A study points out that religion and ethical systems are the major source of social values in Asia and these social values have an effect on the growth of the economy concerned (Oshima, 1996). Economic growth relies upon moral impetus (Friedman, 2009). It is contradictory that a society which is famous for its democracy comprises people who follow moral norms, but interpreting them in an irrational way. A society where gender, class and caste discrimination exists cannot proceed with the pacing technology. Morality, which is completely based on sociality without rationality will certainly hamper growth and development. With the present changing trend in rigidity, we can hope that with time the rigidity in the concept of morality will decrease and be replaced by equality where morality is defined independent of caste, creed and gender.

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Signification and Resolution of Absolute in a Textual Structure: A Study in Relation to Bhartṛhari and Jacques Lacan

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Epistemic categories, due upon their relative nature, incessantly form a chain of relations to finally result into the formation of structures, which further conforming to the meanings of each other, in an each to each relation, form a bigger structure that emerges with a wholesome meaning. A structure owes its immediate existence always to its meaning. If it is not meaningful, it won't be conceded to be a structure, as a structure is not just a combination of various constitutive units which in themselves are dysfunctional and of no consequence, but it is a hierarchically progressed formation, where constituents combine on their relational affinity or interface sacrificing/ contributing their meanings to the cause of the configuration of this meaningful structure as a whole. Dialectical investigation of the evolution of meaning in a structure, lent by the conventions/traditions of a language community that does not insist upon the perpetual deferral of meaning in the created linguistic entity, can be done when and only when the duel quality that is, of being *prakāśya* and *prakāśaka* of a linguistic unit or *śabda* or even otherwise a sign is well understood.

Whether it is Indian or Western tradition of knowledge, in both the semiological issues are dealt with the semantic goals, which even philosophically can be verified, as meaning has always been the ultimate objective of any subject, object or predicate. In its absence the only thing that persists is crisis, crisis to the being of existing entity. In both the traditions, knowledge is observed to have been inseparably associated with the language factor. Both view the world as a fruit of lexical confluences in a linguistically formed structure, where the basic insistence is upon the creation and creation presupposes semantic clarity assisted by the creative faculty of the body, functioning as the source of formational instinct. This creation of identity is universally the same, irrespective of any rule or law of a particular language; it keeps on forming the unformed forms, unevolved entities and inconfigured meanings. Thorough investigation of the formation of meaning in the textual/conceptual forms has very clearly shown the method of processing of an individual meaningless (in the context of real/true meaning) unit, which is not even distantly predictable to have the relation with a meaningful linguistic entity to be formed by it in connection with the other similar units.

Jacques Lacan, a significant exponent of post-structuralist movement, who, being a psychoanalyst, tries to understand the psychological postulations through the semiotic deductions and semantic presumptions of structuralist movement, where he starts with the Saussurean propositions, but following the varied tracks and devising new ways reaches a destination which undoubtedly is poststructuralist. Lacan, who like Bhartṛhari is less radical and more logical in his expositions, is indispensably important in the present discussion on the formation of meaning in a conceptual content. He, in his analysis, very suitably proves the point that signification is common to both, linguistics and psychology, which, if broadly analysed, suggests that signification is all pervading, and it is its immanence that unceasingly makes this world exist. Lacan very well analyses Saussurean propositions and understands them in the poststructuralist framework through the proper illustration of the applicability of the Saussurean formulations. He, like Bhartṛhari and Saussure, believes in the final resolution of the meaning of a signifier but this actualization of meaning which, for Saussure, is concretely obtained and takes place in the consciousness, is the formation of unremitting series of signification, and its resolution takes place in the unconscious, finally, it resolves in the unreal and therefore, 'reality' for Lacan is something 'impossible'. Lacan makes his move in the linguistic study from Saussure, whom he, like his other successors, attributes credit for many of the valuable propositions and particularly for giving a start to the modern linguistics. He takes up the Saussurean terms like signifier and signified as formulaic propositions and contends Saussure for considering them parallel to each other as he finds signifier over the signified and represents them by 'S' and 's' respectively, which find expression as a formula in the following manner:

$$\frac{S}{s}$$

For him 'S' or signifier does not directly lead to 's' signified but leads to another signifier which further leads to some other signifier and in this way the process of signification moves on and on which finally resolves in the unconscious where 'reality' being unattainable is not obtained. So, here, Lacan interfaces Saussure by refuting his conception of the functioning of signifier and signified, where unlike Saussure he says that an object is not identified/ constituted/recognized through this systematic processing of signifier giving way to signified and consequently sign, instead he is of the opinion that signifier leads to the other signifier and further to another, as signification utterly relies on another signification to take place. Lacan opines that in language an object is not formed as a thing [signifier + signified = sign (the thing referred)] but as a concept giving way to the further transactions; always decoding a linguistic code leads to another code and it further leads to some other and thus it continues as a search for the "meaning of meaning" to reach to the finally resolved signified of the signifier, which is hardly obtained. We have already come across Bhartṛharian parallels to 'signifier' 'signified' and 'sign' in the preceding pages of the thesis, which indistinctly betray the similar characteristics. Lacan, unlike both Bhartṛhari

and Saussure, who consider signifier/*sphoma* creative of signified/*vaikhaīy* and vice-versa, opines differently and shows primarily the dominance of signifier over signified; he contends that on looking the process of signification, "We are forced, then, to accept the notion of an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier" (Lacan 170), as, a signifier does not stay firmly even with the other signifiers led to, it keeps on leading to the other and another incessantly, that means Lacan is of the opinion that we cannot find the final signified of a signifier, it is unattainable owing to the persistent shift of signified, and thus rarely the process of signification would end. To illustrate his point, Lacan very convincingly rebuts Saussurean notion of signification by replacing his instance of the picture of a tree and its signified, which in Lacan's eyes is not more than a part and parcel of the process of nomenclature, by the two bathroom doors which in all the ways are same but viewed differently because of the signifiers attached to them, they are perceived as different altogether from each other as the distinction is intrinsic in the signifiers "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" which each door bears respectively. Though the doors are identical they are recognized as different due to the signifiers used. Here, the signifier "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" lead to other signifiers, therefore, the clearly identical doors are perceived to be different, here signification leads to further signification, meaning of the identical doors is altered and due to the signifiers "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" another meaning is created which varies from the objects perceived identical. Emphasizing the fluidity in meaning of the signified, Lacan further cites an example of two small children, a little boy and a little girl:

> A train arrives at a station. A little boy and a little girl, brother and sister, are seated in a compartment face to face next to the window through which the buildings along the station platform can be seen passing as the train pulls to a stop. 'Look', says the brother, 'we are at ladies!'; 'Idiot!' replies his sister, 'Can't you see we're at Gentlemen' (167).

Here, in the example both the children contend each other as they are viewing two different signs at the same place. They are not ready to accept each other and come to a conclusion because of their different points of view, which actually create the difference in the signified. So, both the children, in their place, are right because whatever they clearly perceive are opining. Bhartṛhari, too, in respect of the same opines correspondingly, and like a predecessor of poststructuralist thoughts, considers meaning under the effect of the factors which poststructuralists concede to be crucial for the alteration in the meaning obtained in a particular state of affairs. Consider the following *śloka*:

> *avasthādeśakālānām bhedādbhinnāsu śaktitu/*
> *bhāvānāmanumānena prasiddhiratidurlabhā//32//(I: 3.)*

Here Bhartṛhari says that the nature of the substance or essence can rarely be defined and determined through the reasoning or even otherwise inference, as it differs with the change in *avasthâdeúakślânâm* (the state, place, and time). These three factors are the principle causes behind the variation in meaning, as change in any of

the aforesaid aspects leads to the change in meaning. Now, this vulnerability of the character of meaning quite explicitly exhibits its fluid nature, which poststructuralist theoreticians explained very well. The poststructuralist critics differ from Bhartṛhari, especially in respect of the resolution of meaning, which for him finally is obtained by the authority of the *Vedas* as the decisive power over everything, but for poststructuralists this resolution is endlessly deffered.

Lacan's analysis itself aims to understand Freud by the juxtaposition of structuralist ideas mainly those of signifier, signified of Saussure and metaphor and metonymy of Jakobson which seem to have been supported in the Freudian propositions. He comprehends Freudian propositions in respect of signification, which Freud expounded in his *Die Traumedeutung.* Lacan considers dream as a kind of writing and says that the functioning of this dream work (*Traumarbeit*) is as per the law of signification through signifiers. He finds many parallels to his poststructuralist postulations in Freudian terminology such as *Entstellung* (distortion or transposition) which indistinctly refer to his "incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier" (170). He further considers other terms too, which significantly correspond to Jakobson's exposition of metaphor and metonymy like *Verdichtung* (Condensation) and *Verschiebung* (displacement). Lacanian interpretation of Freud's expositions very clearly shows that there, too, the centre was linguistic structure as the word 'interpretation' is inseparably associated with Semantics, a significant branch of linguistics. The title of Freud's monumental work, "*Die Traumdeutung*" in English "The Interpretation of Dreams" itself is suggestive of its central contention, as the German word "*Traumdeutung*" means "assigning meaning to dreams" which simultaneously in respect of linguistic terminology means that in Freud's book the semantic goal is to be achieved through the semiological functioning. Many of the German terms in Freudian propositions very clearly anticipate structuralist formulations either in the form of Jakobson's postulations or in the form of Saussurean opinions as Lacan suggests and proves in his contentions. Lacan recounts those German Freudian terms which unequivocally and in similar contexts have been used by Jakobson leading to the parallel destination in his illustration of metaphor and metonymy. Lacan views construction or for that matter structure of unconscious as language; the similarity is due upon the signification as the existence of both of these lie on the network of signification. He considers unconscious as a product of signification and much in itself a signifying system which actually is true about language also. Lacan in his study aims to show the insistence of the letter in the unconscious where Freud's *Traumarbeit* (dream-work) is processed; he in this regard is apparently right as the linguistic or even otherwise semiological functioning is not brought to the conscious state of mind, it unconsciously is done, provided all the necessary set of rules are present to encode the message for signification. In his proposition, Lacan considers this 'unconscious' as the most important factor behind the signification of signifiers or even otherwise those incoherently formed dream images. Bhartṛhari too, talks about the states of dream and wakefulness in the following *śloka*, where talking about the role/functions of speech/language in the states of *pravibhâga* and *avibhâga* (the

state of wakefulness and the state of dream respectively), he makes it clear that in *pravibhâga*, the *kartâ* (subject) functions in connection with the *karma* (object) through speech/language while in *avibhâga*, it is the speech/language that gets expressed in all the forms namely subject, object and the motive as the agent which has a role to play in the state of wakefulness is inactive in the state of dream. Consider the given *śloka*:

pravibhāge yathā kartā tathā kārye pravartate/
avibhāge tathāsaiva kāryatvenā vibhavatitathā//128// (I: 12)

Lacan views the functioning of language in the context of psychology, particularly in relation with the states of consciousness and unconsciousness. Lacan here doesn't differ from Bhartṛhari or Saussure, when says, "What the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of language". (163), as this 'structure of language' is indistinctly the same as Saussure's 'langue' or further it can also be viewed to have functional similarity with Bhartṛhari's *sphoma*, which always is considered to be behind all the utterances universally. In Bhartṛhari's proposition, the structure of language or the system of language which in Saussurean terminology is addressed as 'langue' is located in the unconscious as Bhartṛhari says, "*tadwacchabdo'pi buddhistha shrutinâm kârâm pâthak,*" that the structure/system of language located in budhhi distinguishes and decodes a *śabda* to be comprehended; here the *budhhi* referred is actually the 'unconscious mind' of Lacan which brings the set of rules/system of language forward without intimating it to the conscious mind, when required, and the work gets done. Bhartṛhari also sees the speech as a manifestation of the conscious mind as he says that within and outside a human being this speech exists as his *caitanya* (consciousness).

The structuralist propositions have widely been conceded in Western knowledge system after its emergence, particularly, by those, who some way or the other, have been associated with the structuralist or the poststructuralist movements. And therefore, a proposition, that language precedes any kind of knowledge, awareness or this conscious being as all these emerge after the emergence of language, is universally uncontested. Bhartṛhari, in the very first *śloka* of his *Vâkyapadîyam,* considers language or particularly the basic constituent of language beyond any beginning or the end while in this world all other things are temporal as whatever has been begotten is bound to have its end. It was Bhartṛhari who proposed that no knowledge was existing before the language, and no knowledge will remain after the language. We have already seen Saussure saying, "There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (112). And thus it can easily be understood that Lacan's proposition in the same context as: "Language and its structure exist prior to the moment at which each subject at a certain point in his mental development makes his entry into it." (163), is undoubtedly an extension to Bhartṛharian and Saussurean expositions in respect of the same. Lacan, like Bhartṛhari, considers language all powerful, and like Saussure, concedes it beyond the power of an individual and calls the speaking subject, the person, who makes the utterance as "slave of language", whose place he says is already "inscribed at birth"(163). It is the language that governs

the subject and its world. This view is undoubtedly Bhartṛharian and Saussurean in approach as both were the believers of the same notion which they concretely observed and then conceptualized their formative opinions in considering the language all powerful, assigning the highest place to it by deeming it to be the creator of the world like almighty.

Lacan's analysis of structure in the poststructuralist discussion is not exactly the same as Saussure's or Derrida's, but it bears the impact of psychology, where he too, like other structuralists and poststructuralists, shows prime concern with the assignment of meaning to the given structure. Lacan doesn't deny the idea of the formation of meaning in a structure or through a structure as he himself has the similar opinion in this regard. He says, "...it is in the chain of signifier that the meaning 'insists' but that none of its elements 'consists' in the signification of which it is at the moment capable" (170). This Lacanian observation is very close to the Bhartṛharian postulations and Saussurean propositions. Lacan, talking about the chain of signifier, gives appropriate instance to explicate his point, he views this chain as "Rings of a necklace that is a ring in another necklace made of rings" (169). Corresponding to Saussurean proposition, the relation between the different rings of Lacan is that of difference, and these constitutive elements (as these rings constitute a necklace) don't contain value in them individually, as Bhartṛhari in his *Vâkyapadīy* says about the phonemes which constitute a sentence, the end product or a structure with value. Similarly, these small rings are useful for contributing their parts in the constitution of the necklace as meaning moves through them and for a time being it may be seen in the necklace immediately formed, which also is no more than a ring in the formation of a bigger necklace where the value gets shifted from the smaller to bigger necklace. This shift of value/meaning actually is the reality in Lacanian exposition of the idea, where in the structurization of the bigger entity, the smaller unit dissolves its individual self and makes the bigger entity meaningful, and therefore, to Lacan, the reality seems 'impossible', unattainable. It keeps on passing through the small rings to big rings and then to bigger and then further to bigger than the bigger and so on and so forth as here the biggest ring is rarely or hardly constituted. Bhartṛhari too, presents the similar postulation and calls phonemes, the smaller units, unreal, as the value they contain individually is not real in the context of the bigger structure. For example, the value of a phoneme individually would be unreal in the context of the word constituted of this phoneme in combination with the other phonemes, and similarly the meaning of this word would be unreal, when it combines to form a sentence with other words, and further more, this smaller group of words, or for that matter, a smaller sentence wouldn't be containing real value when it would form the bigger sentence with other constituents of the same kind, which similarly, be extended further. But Bhartṛhari there differs from Lacan, where this shift of value in creation of the bigger structure resolves at a point, and the structure, required to be comprehended, obtains the contextually true meaning which may also be verified by the authority of the *Vedas*, while for Lacan this shift doesn't stop and the final meaning is unattainable, which is due upon the cessation of the continuum of this move.

For Lacan the identity that one carries or even otherwise the proclamation of 'I' is not outside the purview of signification, it also owes its existence to the networks, functioning within the system of language whether as signifier or signified. Lacan views signification as substitution of the actual existence. And this linguistic identity as a process, incessantly, is in the search of unity, wholesomeness, coherence and above all the reality which as per the nature of language are perpetually in the state of deferral or postponement. Lacan has very much been aware of the linguistic reality or construction of reality through language. He, like a true poststructuralist at several occasions, talks about truth and its truthfulness in the circumference of language, his examination of language consists of such inquisitive features which question the very existence of even truth and reality. But also like a structuralist he has full faith over the power of language which in itself sufficiently deals with all the transactions of the world and proffers it its immediate existence which particularly by common human beings is viewed as organized, systematic, coherent and real while the actual constitution of the world is linguistic due upon the codes, where only one reality is immanent that is signification. Now, this signification itself is creative of 'unreal' and is a creation of language as Lacan also sees everything within the linguistic sphere, he on truth says, "It is with the appearance of language the dimension of truth emerges"(190). The realm of truth, for Lacan, is actually the word, it is this word from which the truth or lie proceeds. It should further be understood that a word, synonymous with *śabda*, is not only the realm of truth but is realm of all those things, which depend on a word for their existence and here in this world everything depends on word/*śabda* or for that matter language as Bhartṛhari calls it a seed of the entire universe, everything evolves from it (the seed). Consider the following *śloka* for wider understanding:

ekasya sarvabījasya yasya ceyamanekadhā/
bhoktṛbhoktavyarūpe ca bhogarūpeṇa ca sthiti//4//(I: 1)

He says that it is this *śabda* which expresses itself in all the forms; it has got the manifestation of *bhoktâ* (enjoyer), *bhukta* (enjoyed) and *bhoga* (enjoyment), and in all the states, as per Bhartṛhari who considers it Brahma, the *ś*abda Brahma which prevails everywhere, which simultaneously is the cause of reality and illusion in one and the same thing.

Lacan, in his writings which particularly deal with the psycho-linguistic analysis, examines the immanence of letter in the unconscious or for that matter its direct relation with the unconscious. He begins his study with the Freudian contentions and shows there that Freud himself was very much pre-occupied with the linguistic approach, as where so ever the meaning in any form is the centre of inquisition/enquiry, the letter/word indispensably would be present/significant there. Lacan, unequivocally, insists that the conjunction of two images is not a metaphoric creative formation but of two signifiers equally actualized. Here, 'image' refers to the actual object, which always is a subjective proposition, relying for its identity on different letters/words, attributed to it in the different contexts, considering it distinct. Lacan, analyzing Freud, explores those entrancing facts, present in Freudian conception, which for an ordinary Psychoanalyst, whose concern is not philological issues will entirely, be irrelevant.

Lacan writes, "So the unnatural images of the boat on the roof; or the man with a comma for a head, which are specifically mentioned by Freud, are examples of dream-images that are to be taken only for their value as signifiers" (176). It should here be understood unambiguously that signifier gains value only after signification, and then accordingly, the signifier attains the magnitude. Suppose this image of "boat on the roof" doesn't find a suitable elucidation or in other words cannot be attributed some meaning/value, it would cease even to be a signifier as an image attains the status of being a signifier when and only when it signifies some value. Lacan's preoccupation with the psychoanalytic study of linguistic categories or even otherwise the linguistic study of psychological contents is very concretely actualized in the discursive formation on the resolution of meaning of a signifier, which incessantly forms the series of signification for the given signifier. Lacan, being an exponent of the same tradition, opines invariably the same as Bhartṛhari and Saussure that the creativity is an intrinsic feature of language, which in the world is responsible for the prevailing order, systematization, and above all knowledge. It is also perceived as a form of experience, which basically is a linguistic construct, as in the absence of language distinction between two ideas or two thoughts is impossible, therefore he is of the opinion that in the world, we live in, there is no scope for pre-linguistic experiences to be found, whatever we have as experience is undoubtedly post-linguistic, as comprehension of the existence of a situation is possible only through language. Bhartṛhari and Saussure both considered the experience itself as a form of language structure as in the absence of language there won't be any distinction between living and non-living beings. This contention can further be seen to have been supported covertly by one of the famous precursors of enlightenment René Descartes, who remarking 'I think therefore I am', conceived his very existence, his being, as the result of thinking, in a way he calls himself a 'thinking being' whose essence indispensably is due upon the 'thinking' which similarly cannot survive in the absence of language, thus the 'language' being the cause of thinking is irrevocably the cause of 'being' and therefore, is also the cause of this world of beings. Saussure in the absence of language calls the thought as "indistinct masses", beyond comprehension, unidentifiable lots. Bhartṛhari, long before Lacan, Saussure or even otherwise Descartes said the same thing in his 127th *śloka* of the *Vâkyapadīy*. He says if this speech/language is gone, the man would be no more than a piece of wood or stone as with the language the consciousness would also be gone and in its absence difference between living and non-living beings or a man and a piece of wood would be of no meaning. The functioning of this organized and beautiful world indispensably is due upon the language which makes the human race the most intelligent being of the earth.

Thus, we see that Lacan's analysis of language and the formation of meaning in this system as has been said is very logically founded where he sometimes seems to be structuralist in opinion but in the next moment his approach to the analysis proves him to be a poststructuralist. And these attributes of Lacan can also be seen in common with Bhartṛhari, who, when compared with Derrida and Lacan, is not less poststructuralist in his postulations. Lacan views a situation from two different points of view and

emphasizes on the relevance of context in respect of the formation of meaning for the situation being considered, which evidently, is a poststructuralist approach. To illustrate the idea, Lacan takes an instance of 'game-strategy' where winning the game is the only motto and the meaning of success, where for the purpose, deceiving the adversary is the part of the game-strategy but when this success achieved is evaluated on the scale of betrayal, which the adversary faced, who did not practice it for having faith in the game rules, would connote it as an act of inconstancy which for the player who practiced the game-strategy is success. This can better be understood with another simple illustration that one situation can never be viewed similarly as it varies from person to person depending on the context of evaluation. For example, something that is called 'success' in the context of winner is viewed contrarily as 'failure' in the case of the looser, while this 'success' of the winner indispensably depends upon the 'failure' of the looser. Both the opponents cannot view the final result of the game as 'success', or even otherwise, 'failure'. The result is viewed distinctly, due upon the distinct context. That is why, to Lacan, the 'reality' seems impossible and signification of the given signifier unceasingly takes place. Lacan here differs from both Bhartṛhari and Saussure, when he views language as open, since in its openness it constantly postpones the resolution of meaning. This deferral of meaning can also be understood by studying his opinion on 'real' which can be taken to be synonymous with meaning which he never accurately defines and which seems 'impossible' to him. So, it should also be understood that meaning is a reality and if real is impossible, so is meaning, it is always present in its illusive form as it continuously changes, having been affected by the various formative factors.

"...structures reveal an ordering of possible exchanges which, even if unconscious, is inconceivable outside the permutations authorized by language"(164) observes Lacan. This observation is universally acceptable as it can be taken to be the spirit of the principal pronouncements of the most of the theory, having associations with semiology and semantics. Bhartṛhari long before Lacan, throughout his treatise emphasizes the same idea, which, later on having been postulated as the foremost cogitation of Saussurean linguistics, is followed by the structuralists and the poststructuralists. Nothing, in this world of linguistic phenomena, is possible to be conceived outside the permutational relations allowed by language, for instance, in the word *auspicious* the meaning is conceivable only because the permutation of the phonemes is authorized by the language otherwise the same group of letters or phonemes, but as *cpisosuua*, which is not authorized by the language, is unintelligible and consequently non-existent in the system of this language. Similar is the case with a sentence, paragraph, or even otherwise a text, everywhere only authorized permutations make sense and contribute in the further conception.

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Poetics as resistance: Exploring the selected poetry of Pablo Neruda and Sachidananda Vatsayayan Ajñeya.

ARNAB CHATTERJEE

Since ancient times, literature has fulfilled its 'hallowed' task of both mirroring the society of which it has been an undeniable product, as well as critiquing it. As early as 380 B.C, Plato envisaged an ideal society or *The Republic*, from where all poets would be banished and the only songs allowed would be hymns. Plato was, perhaps, reacting against the plays of his time, a reaction that was thoroughly tinged with his concept of "the theory of forms", and also against certain pre-conceived notions regarding justice and the ultimate mission of life. This same reaction found counter-reactions from his own student Aristotle who assigned the genre of tragedy a special status: thus *Poetics* was in many ways a reaction to the literature that his predecessor had formulated.

In this connection, it may be good to take note of the following fact that poetry can always act as a vehicle of protest and change in two ways: either, it can voice the shortcomings and generate alternative trajectories of existence overtly through a subtle engagement of an appropriate tone, or it may bring into limelight themes, techniques and modes of representation that challenge previous modes of signification. Thus, commenting on the role of a writer, Sartre in his *What is Literature?* ("Why Write?") fittingly remarks, "Each has his reasons: for one, art is a flight; for another *a means of conquering*" (in Leith*et al.*1336;emphasis added). This resistance in the literary realm may also be discerned in the poems and plays of Amiri Baraka (1934-2014) whose subtle disregard of the rules of grammar, standard idiom and even a theme per se reflects his gradual disenchantment of white models of poetic composition and a subsequent move towards Afro-centricity and the esoteric. In this connection, the words of Henry C. Lacey seem pertinent regarding the writer's growing "militancy" in writing styles and his disregard for the overall society of which he is a part and the consequences of such an engagement:

However, mainstream concern with Baraka as a literary artist *very nearly ceased* in the latter half of the decade. Because of his growing militancy and increasingly energetic participation in the socio-political realm, Baraka's literary output, *reflecting his new posture,* was largely ignored. When treated at all, he was discussed as a revolutionary black nationalist peripherally concerned with "art". (vii; emphasis added)

It is worthwhile here to note that when Baraka was penning his early poems, that came up in volumes like "Black Dada Nihilismus" and "Sabotage", he was hailed as one of those writers who is the harbinger of the New Black Poetry in the USA. But Baraka became controversial with the publication of his volume of poems *Somebody Blew Up America And Other Poems* (2003) that shows his indictment of the Jews who may have had a role in the bombing up of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in 2001. As a consequence of such a near-militant viewpoint, he was deprived of his second poet-laureateship of New Jersey. But Baraka continued even in the face of such odds.

Whatever be the consequences of such a militant viewpoint, examples are not scarce that writers have time and again called for a radical change in the status quo and a vision for a golden future often in the Shelleyan fashion. However, this paper would like to chart this aspect of poetry or even poetic form as a mode of resistance to the current levels of perception in the selected writings of the Chilean poet and diplomat Pablo Neruda (1904-73) and the postmodernist Hindi writer Sachidananda HeranandaVatsayan 'Ajñeya' (1911-87) , often referred as simply 'Ajñeya' (meaning the unknown or what cannot be comprehended). This comparative analysis is relevant keeping in mind that not only both these writers were near-contemporaries, but also because their selected poetry (or entire poetics) emanates from the conditions of their era of which they were an undeniable part. Not only do Neruda's poems resonate with the struggles of the common man in Chile during one of the most intense periods of military dictatorship in the Latin-American world, but in their avoidance of grammar, a 'logical' synchronization of the thought process evidenced in his yoking several images by force in the metaphysical fashion, use of surrealism and the overt use of sexuality we may discern a defiance of the then pressure groups through the adaptation of an appropriate poetic 'creed' in the writer. These "pressure" groups may have consisted of the rightist forces that were at perfect loggerheads with the socialists, the latter that Neruda whole-heartedly supported in Chilean politics at that point of time.

At the other end of the spectrum, Ajñeya was writing at a time when the entire Indian subcontinent was galvanized around issues of independence; he was also active during the height of the Cold war and the war in Vietnam (so was Neruda). Ajñeya was writing in a typical style in Hindi (he is known to have also written in English) known as *prayogvaad*or experimental mode that later gets streamlined within the group of poets known as *nayekavi*or *nayikavita* whose English equivalent means "new poets" and "new poetry". This school of poets included such avant-gardists like Muktibodh, Nagarjun, Sarweshwar Dayal Saxena, Dhumil, Kedar Nath Singh and others. This type of poetry relied not only on overt intellectualism, but also believed in the avant-gardist techniques that consisted in writings that were anti-establishment in tone. This also meant that his verses had ample affinities with the Hungry Generation movement ("Bhooki Peedhi") in Bengali literature that also had a similar stance towards

the incumbent government. We may bear in mind the fact that he was active in Calcutta during this time and edited the newspaper *Dinamaan.*Ajñeya was a pioneer in many ways: he laid the foundation of modern Hindi journalism, poetry and edited the *Saptaks*, a literary series. His writings range from the subtle eye for nature that may be seen to be a continuing trend of *rīti*era poetics in Hindi that was christened as *sringaar kaal*, a revolt against the *chaayavaad* era that may roughly be compared to the age of Romanticism in Hindi[1], an unforgiving eye for the dichotomy of the urban society that was slowly moving economically ahead after independence and a leaning towards Buddhist philosophy of renunciation in certain cases. Ajñeya's poetry is not only a reaction to the overt subjectivity of *chaāyāvāad*, but is also a response to the rapidly changing era in which he lived. A revolutionary during the Indian struggle for independence, imprisoned for the infamous Delhi Conspiracy Case, his disdain of the contradictions in existence probably led to the formation of an oeuvre that included almost anything that needed a thoroughgoing scrutiny from a philosophic and existential perspective. We may have a look at one of his poems entitled "Sâp̃"/"The Snake"from his volume of poems *Indradhanuṣh Roinde Huethe/ The Rainbow Was Trampled* published in 1957[2] to understand the power of condensation that he uses to explicate the evils of the then modern, urban life:

Sâ p̃
Tum sabhya to hue nahi
Nagar me basnâbhī
Tumhen ahināayā
Ek baāt punchu (uttar doge?)
Tab kaise śikhâ daśnâ ?
Vis Kahâ pâyâ ?[3] (Ajñeya, "Sâ p̃")

The poet is conscious of the duality of modern urban life and the inherent uselessness of materialist leanings. But the typical dweller in the city is well adept in such ways, hence the poet's conviction that it is the city life and its mores that is the root of the serpent's venom. Not only is the poet's scathing satire evident in the amazing power of verbal condensation, but by invoking the image of the Biblical serpent who deceived Adam and Eve, the poet is, perhaps pointing to the essential 'fallen'nature of city life.

The poet's gradual sense of the erosion of traditional values and the probable rise of a new trajectory of existence finds expression in yet another poem called "Khisak Gaye Dhūp"/ "The Sunbeam is Slanted" in the volume of his poems *Indra Dhanuṣh Ronde Hue The/ The Rainbow was Trampled* wherein he movingly depicts the withering away of the roses that may symbolize innocence and even a pre-lapsarian existence:

Paitane se dhīre dhīre
Khisak gaye hai dhūp
Śirhanerakhehai
Pīle gulāb.
Kyânahi tumebhī

Dikhainkajūrd---
Dard tum me bhī ubhrâ.[4] (Ajñeya "Khisak Gaye Hai Dhūp")

In the above poem taken from his volumes of poems written in 1957, the poet bemoans the trampling of the rainbow that symbolically signifies the erosion of religion, finer human sensibilities and even Mother Nature. In the image of "pīle gulâb"/ yellow roses that traditionally signify friendship and finer tunings in human relationships, the poet sees their gradual withering in face of the non-availability of adequate sunshine that is again the sign of the rampant destruction of Nature. Like Wilfred Owen's "Futility", the "kind sun" is powerless to bring life into existence and the poetic persona asks readers if they could feel the rose gradually fading into non-existence. Thus, the poet is not only ironically depicting the loss of the erstwhile state of affairs, but is also indicating the advent of destructive forces that would defy the laws of Nature. The only hope that the poet can find is in mankind who may witness this depreciation, feel the same and be an agent of active change.

The poet's resistance is not only restricted as far as the contradictions in modern life are concerned, but also includes commentaries on the very art of composing a poem using the techniques of the anti-blazon. We shall briefly touch upon this aspect in one of the poems of Neruda shortly. The poem "Kalgi Bâjre Kī"/"The Ear of the Corn" that is from his volume of poems *Harī Ghâs Par Kṣaṇ Bhar/A While on the Green Grass* (1949) shows a near-resentment for the excessive use of figures of comparisons that have been used by erstwhile poets of *rīti* and *châyâvâd* era. As a rejoinder, the poet has his own style of addressing his lady-love and praising her beauty: her hour glass figure and slim waist line have been compared to the swinging corn cob as well as to the green grass over which thebeloved presumably walks. The influence of the poets of *rīti* era is clear but the tone of resistance to traditionally accepted norms of praising beauty is evident:

Harī bichelī ghâs
Dolti Kalgi Charhare Bajre Ki
Agar Mein Tumko Lalati Sâñjke Naabh Ki Akelī
Tarika Ab ahi kahta
Yaśaradke bhūrkīnihâr—kuwahihuhi
……
Nahikara nkimera hriday uthlayâsunahai
Yaakimerapyaarmeilahai.
Balkikewalyahi: ye upmânmeile ho gayehai
Devtâ in pratikonkekargayehai koonch.[5] (Ajñeya "Kalgi BajreKi")

Dina Nath Shukla in his *Naye Kavi aurUnki Kritiyân/New Poets and their Poems* summarizes the poetic creed of Ajñeya in the following words :

The role of the *Saptak*tradition is huge when it comes to the development of New Poetry. Ajñeya is the harbinger of this tradition. This endeavor of the poet culminates in a literary revolution. The one that provided new directions, new ways of expression and new human values to the realm of poetry. This tradition has revolted

against preceding tendencies and has shown an inclination towards progressive consciousness.[6](1)

It would not be a digression here to take stock of those circumstances under which the poet was writing his later poems , especially volumes like *Pahle Mein Sannâṭâ Buntâ Hun/Firstly I Weave Loneliness* (1973) and *MahavrikshaKe Niche/ Under the Cosmic Tree* (1977) and the existential angst reflected therein with hopes for renewal that is still tempered by his satiric outlook and revolutionary zeal. Firstly, Ajñeya's revolutionary outlook is thoroughly coloured by his experiences of the Indian struggle for independence and his participation in the Second World War. Secondly, his poetic creed incorporates his near-hated of blind individualism and a distrust in the materialist leanings of the current generation. Thus, his poetics is not only an endeavor to refute preceding poetic styles in particular, but also conventional outlook in general. In his later poetry, his faith in the essential nobility of humanity still remains unshaken, but certain incidents like the proclamation of the Emergency in 1975 in India by the then government, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the ongoing Cold War and the rise of dictatorship in several Latin-American nations may have bred in him a mood of despondency. This is seen in his volume of poems *Pahle Mein Sannâṭâ Buntâ Hun* (1973) where in certain poems, the bard bewails the loss of the traditional bond that man had with his surroundings, the loss of faith ensuing from the same and refusal to accept present modes of existence. This last tendency is easily seen in the short poem "Hum Ghūm Āye Śahar"/ "We Visited the City":

Garithaharanekeliye
Jagahchojtechojte
Hum ghūm âye śahar:
Bimekikishtechukâte
Bīt gayeīzindagi
Atīt se katgaye
Chadhâkephūl chandan.[7] (Ajñeya "Hum Ghūm Āye Śahar")

Neruda has also been a prolific poet, whose writing career spans to a staggering fifty-five years. His poetry seems to have been influenced by the writings of Gabriela Minstral, Octavio Paz and Lorca, not to forget mentioning the subtle influences of Tagore's prose poems that left their indelible mark on the Latin-American world. It is somewhat difficult to enumerate his 'domain' of writing per se, but his abiding interest in matters of love (he married three times and Matilde Urrutia is the Muse of his one of the volumes of poems), the achievements of the Inca civilization of Chile and parts of neighboring Peru, his fierce disdain of authoritarianism and his interest in surrealism are a proof of that rich mosaic of poetics that we distinctively term Nerudian. He also acknowledged the impact of Walt Whitman on his poems, using the Whitmanesque technique of blending subjectivity, nature and history as units of analyses and line as the criterion for metrical analysis. Neruda's poignant expression of the agony of the Spanish people during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) resulted in his*Spain in our Hearts* which is a lament for the defeat of the Republican forces under the fascist

general Franco. On the other hand, his *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair* (1924) deals with the theme of love with the explicit use of sexual imagery that invited the censure of many a critic. His use of green ink while penning poems reflects the poet's latent desire for hope and freedom. His experiences in Spain coupled with the execution of Lorca made him into an ardent communist all through his life. In *Alturas de Macchu Picchu*/*The Heights of Macchu Picchu* (1945), a poem in twelve parts, he lauded the achievements of this magnificent pre-Columbian civilization, but also understood that it was sheer oppression and slavery that made this possible. It is well known that he often went into hiding after being threatened by rightist elements active in Chilean politics. Neruda's admiration of Joseph Stalin and his conviction that it was because of him that Hitler's army could be checked made many opponents of him, but he came to rue his euphoria later. In 1946, after Gabriel Gonzalez Videla's abrupt turn against communist and leftist forces and outlawing the same under "The Law of Permanent Defense of Democracy", Neruda turned even more violent against Videla's policies, especially in the brutal oppression of a communist-lead miner's campaign in Lota in northern Chile. Senator Neruda was removed from his post, he went into hiding for around thirteen months in a friend's house and escaped through the Andes mountains into Argentina, an incident that he would vividly recount in his Nobel prize acceptance speech along with its fiery zeal for hopes of renewal:

Our original guiding stars are struggle and hope. But there is no such thing as a lone struggle, no such thing as a lone hope. In every human being are combined the most distant epochs, passivity, mistakes, sufferings, the pressing urgencies of our own time, the pace of history. (Neruda "Towards the Splendid City")

His journey into India, Sri Lanka and many European nations aided by artists like Pablo Picasso himself culminated in his *Los Versos del Capitan*/*The Captain's Verses* that Neruda later published in anonymity in 1952 because of the autobiographical nature of the verses and their explicit use of sexuality. By 1952, Videla's policies were a spent force and the leftist Salvador Allende came to power and wanted Neruda to campaign for him. By this time, Neruda had become an internationally renowned poet, but his praise of communism led to the award of the Nobel Prize in 1964 to Jean-Paul Sartre that was due him. During the International PEN conference in New York City in 1966 he was denied entry but the playwright Arthur Miller prevailed on the then government to grant him a visa.

By 1973, a coup d'etat was carried out by Augusto Pinochet's supporters on Allende's government and Neruda's hopes for a Marxist Chile were not fulfilled. He died of postrate cancer in a nursing home in Santiago, but there is a wide consensus that he was injected a lethal dose at the behest of Pinochet.

It is important to understand the era in which Neruda was writing his poetry, as the period forms a veering between the leftist and rightist forces and the subsequent rise of military dictatorship in Chile and certain other parts of Latin-America.There is no denying the fact the poet was influenced by this general atmosphere of oppression. Also, his opposition of the Vietman war is well-known. Neruda's volume of poems that

he wrote while he was on exile on the island of Capri in Italy entitled *The Captain's Verses* (1953) may help us 'situate' this rebellious tone silently working as a silent under-text in these poems. The defiance of traditional modes of praising a lady-love is clearly seen in the poem "The Queen" that somewhere has its parallels with Ajñeya's poem "KalgiBajre Ki" :

I have named you queen.
There are taller ones than you, taller.
There are purer ones than you, purer.
There are lovelier ones than you, lovelier.
But you are the queen. (5)

Another poem entitled "El Tigre/The Tiger" shows the near-deliberate avoidance of standardized modes of courting a beloved and is remarkable for the use of sexual violence that veers on murder:

I am the tiger
I lie in wait for you among leaves
broad as ingots
of wet mineral.
The white river grows beneath the fog. You come.
Naked you submerge.
I wait.
Then in a leap
Of fire, blood, teeth
with a claw slash I tear away
your bosom, your hips.(49)

In the poem, "The Mountain and the River", of the same volume,the poet vividly recounts the hardships of a common Chilean under the oppressive forces and his imminent re-involvement in the fervent politics of his time:

… Who are those who suffer?
I do not know, but they are my people.
Come with me.
I do not know, but they call to me
And they say to me: "We suffer."
Come with me.
And they say to me: "Your people,
your luckless people,
between the mountain and the river,
with hunger and grief,
they do not want to struggle alone,
they are waiting for you , friend. (93)

As it has been mentioned before, Neruda lauded the accomplishments of the Inca civilization and was thrilled by its architectural skills, but bemoaned the slavery that went with it. His *Canto General* (1950) is an encyclopedia of sorts of the New

World when analyzed from an American-Hispanic standpoint. "The Heights of Macchu Picchu" comprises the second portion of this long poetic composition that runs to some fifteen thousand lines. Some lines may suffice to pinpoint the extent of oppression that made this civilization possible and the bard's denunciation of the same:

Arise to birth with me, my brother.
Give me your hands out of the depths
sownby your sorrows
You will not return from these stone fastnesses.
You will not return from subterranean time.
Your rasping voice will not come back
nor your pierced eyes rise from their sockets.
……
Show me your blood and your furrow;
Say to me: here I was scourged
Because a gem was dull or because the earth
failed to give up in time its tithe of corn or stone.
Point out to me the rock on which you stumbled
the wood they used to crucify your body.
……
I come to speak for your dead mouths. (Neruda "Canto XII" 20)

In conclusion, we may sum up by observing that both these poets adopted a poetics that may be considered a product of their era. A refusal to follow traditional ways of poetic expression, a feel for the suffering humanity, an essential mistrust of authoritarian institutions and hopes of eventual renewal is what links both these two poets otherwise separated across cultures and geographical locations.

Notes

1. *Châyâvâd* or the age of Romanticism in Hindi relied heavily on individualism, the note of melancholy and the description of Nature as did the Romantic movement in English literature. Despite mounting attacks from the Hindi literary community to the feasibility of such a comparison, similarities can well be discerned. For a comprehensive discussion of this era in Hindi literature, consult (Dr.) Nagendra.
2. Though this poem forms a part of the collection that was published in 1957, Ajñeya was much active during post-1965 and his concerns that have an existential aura within them belong to this latter period. His visiting position to The University of California at Berkeley may have given him a chance to know American consumerist culture and urban life that finds expressions in the poems that decry the ills of modern civilization.
3. Translated, it amounts to, "O serpent/ You could not embrace civilization/ Could not acquire the art of dwelling in a city either/ Would I ask a question?/ From whence then came the art to strike?/ whence came the venom then?"
4. Translated, it comes to, "The sunshine slowly and slowly/ recedes from the window sill/ Yellow roses are kept near the bedside/ Could you not see their constitution?/ Did you feel their pain as well?"
5. Translated, it goes like this, "the smooth green grass/your body waves like the corncob/ like the ear of the corn/ If I no longer compare you to the lonely morning star/it's not

because my heart refuses to respond/ but for the simple fact that these metaphors have lost their lustre/they have been rendered godless."

6. Translated from Hindi.
7. Translated, it yields, "Looking for a spot to park the car/ we roamed the city/ spent the entire life paying insurance premiums/ the chord to the past is severed/ by offering flowers and sandals."

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BOOK REVIEWS

***Myths of Today: Essayson Cultural Myth-Criticism [Mitos de hoy: ensayos de mitocrítica cultura]* Collected and introduced by José Manuel Losada, Logos VerlagBerlinGmbH 2016. ISBN: 978-3-8325-4239-9**

The volume *Myths of Today* is divided into two different sections; the first comprisesarticles by eight different researchers; the second including Prof.Losada´s lengthy article "Los mundos del mito" ["The Worlds of Myth"]. In his introduction Dr. Losada explains the main concern of the book: the study and importance of Cultural Myth-Criticism: a way of studying myths in our present-day environment and cultural contexts that includes their significance in contemporary social development.

As mentioned, the first part includes a collection of well-documented studies in modern day re-reading of myths, tracing and identifying them in contemporary literature and art forms. The second part studies in depth the implications of a contemporary socio-cultural approach to mythology. In this sense, it describes the reception of such phenomena in a world of growing skepticism and continuous denial of myths. Thus, it helps guide the reader through the inquiry into how, and more importantly, why, do the myths keep reappearing in a recurrent manner in contemporary societies.It seems convenient to comment first on this second part of the volume since it embraces the whole concept of the actual approach on contemporary mythology to which the first part is a collection of examples.

"The worlds of myth" ["Los mundos del mito"] is a very interesting study on the apparently opposite concepts of immanence and transcendence applied to myths. I say apparently because what the essay will show us is the synthesis, in a sort of Hegelian way, of both concepts. This synthesis becomes necessary to develop the whole Myth-Critical approach to mythology in contemporary expressions of art and culture. Along these lines, the author explains thoroughly the historical and, of course, philosophical difference between the logic of immanence and the logic of transcendence;the opposition between movement and stillness, change and sameness. Moving within these categories, he refers to the different philosophical approaches in the course of history, beginning with a general approximation to idealism via Schelling, the existentialist take on immanence via Camus, and so on. Regarding transcendence Dr. Losada focuses onthe way ontological transcendence evolves into sacred transcendence, elucidating his points with examples from classic and contemporary sources. The evolution of the aforementioned concepts does not stop there. The author takes them one step further to their epitome in "academic immanence,"that is, the actualization, realization and comprehension of the contemporary "act of mythology," and to the cosmic transcendence that offers a remarkable explanation of the updated forms of contemporary mythsby way of examples from the story of *Tristan und Isolde* to cinematographic production *The Matrix*.

Returning to the first half of the volume, the collection of essays offers re-readingsand re-writings of the persistent cultural value of myths, focusing on the last two centuries.

"A myth for the children of today: Dante's trip in the Divine Comedy" ["Un mito para los niños de hoy: el viaje de Dante en la *Divina Comedia*"]by Rosa Affatodeals with different versions of Dante´s work, particularly those adapted for children, in order to provide clear archetypical references explored through the unconscious, originated in the interpretation of the Italian text as a state of dreams and provider of mythical universal references.

Antonella Lipscomb´s "Jean Cocteau: the Tracian Poet of the 20th-century" ["Jean Cocteau o el Poeta de Tracia del siglo XX"] tackles the interpretation of Cocteau's famous series of movies known as the *Orphic Trilogy*, by using the synthesis of the Poet´s Myth as a result of combining The Phoenix and Orpheus. This synthesis, that has become a common-place archetypical reference, finds a renewal in Lipscomb´s essay and provides a myth-critical approach to the movies.

"Myth Mosaic: Macunaíma" ["Mosaico de mitos: Macunaíma"] by CláudiaMalheirosMunhoz is a piece that brings together and gives sense to myths from three radically different mythologies: The Greek, The Brazilian and the African.By handling the figure of Macunaíma as the anti-hero, or the hero that avoids fulfilling his destiny as a mythological being, the article provides a glance at Brazilian actual mythological development as a mixture of the three cultural backgrounds mentioned.

Adrián Menéndez de la Cuesta´s "*L´été* de Albert Camus. Una lecturamitocrítica" explores the mythical undercurrent in Camus´ collection of essays called *L´eté.* Using Theseus as an argumentative thread, the author evinces the mythical hero as the means with which Camus talks about contemporary Europe and provides a frame in which to expose some of the main arguments of the ethical response that he proposes.

"Cyborg: the posthuman myth"["Cíborg: el mitoposthumano"] by AnamaríaGallinal deals with a question that has haunted mankind since ancient times: the ghost in the machine, namely the relationship between conscience, mind, and soul in a being that might be created by man. From the early Rabbis´ golems to the all-seeing I.A.´s, the idea of the replica of the human spirit has troubled us all. In this article, the authoress explores the figure of the cyborg in relation to a possible post-humanism.

Carmen Gómez and Elena Blanch offer a very interesting idea of homeland in the chapter entitled "The mythologization of the nation in European numismatics since the creation of the Euro"["La mitologización de la patria en la numismáticaeuropeadesde la creación del euro"]. They provide an analysis of how the imagery of the currency not only makes reference to each individual nation´s myths, but also becomes part of a greater European mythology.

"Myth, order and transgression: the map of the humanized animal" ["Mito, orden y transgresión: la gráfica del animal humanizado"] is a chapter where Manuel Álvarez Junco offers a reflection on the relation between myths and the way that human communities have developed through the ages, including present day societies. Using comics and animation, he describes how humankind has related to animals as a way to mock its own origin, or its ignorance regarding such origin.

Mercedes Aguirre closes this first half of the book with "Mythological and literary gardens in Homer and other modern testimonies"["Jardinesmitológicos y literarios en Homero y otros testimonies modernos"]. It is a beautiful journey through real and unreal ancestral gardens in ancient Greece as described by Homer; mythological locations where fabulous beings, gods and humans found lust or love. The essay also tells the reader about the characters that appear in such accounts, such as the statues found in *Jardin du Luxemburg* in Paris, including references to paradisiac gardens across diverse mythical cultures, and exploring their relation to the biblical Eden.

All things considered *Myths of Today* is an indispensable volume for anyone whoseeks a first glance, through the particular examples of the first part,as well as a deeper understanding from the theoretical essay that follows on*The World of Myths.*

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Review of *Myths in Crisis. The Crisis of Myth* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), volume edited by José Manuel Losada and Antonella Lipscomb

In the early 21st century, myths are back (if they ever went away). This is probably due to the way they contribute to explainthe world in a synthetic way and, also, because they may have contributedto balance the pessimistic *fin-de-siècle*atmosphere. In effect, myth-criticism – a term coined by Gilbert Durand (*Les structures anthropologiques de l' imaginaire*, 1960) to describe what is nowadays a much wider field –has raised enormous interest in recent years, particularly among scholars who analyze the way human desire is dealt with, nostalgically, in literary and artistic manifestations.

José Manuel Losada and Antonella Lipscomb, co-editors of works such as *Mito e Interdisciplinariedad* (*Myth and Interdisciplinarity*2013), offer a multilingual collection of critical essays (in English, French and Spanish), entitled *Myths in Crisis. The Crisis of Myth*, centered on discussing the crisis of ancient, medieval and modern myths. This is an impressive volume, not only in terms of the quantity and rigor of the papers included, but also in their comprehensive perspective. It presents an up-to-date response to an increasingly demand to dissect the oxymoronic concepts of eternal myth and temporary crisis. The adaptation of myths, their unlikely death and their more than probable rebirth should beadded to the collective unconscious and the immortal nature of Jungian archetypes (Carl Gustav Jung andKarl Kerényi, *L' essence de la mythologie*, 1980).

As José Manuel Losada indicates in his introductory chapter, "The Structure of Myth and the Typology of its Crisis", myths are less fragile than they seem, Even if their mythemes – the unchanging motifs that Lévi-Strauss("The Structural Study of Myth", 1955) set at their basis – are altered, reversed, largely modified or omitted, their disappearance is not at all common. The three types of crisis analyzed include the following: firstly,the modification of some of the myth's constitutive elements, as

demonstrated by the easily recognizable Biblical angels in such films as *Michael* (Nora Ephron, 1996) and *The Preacher's Wife* (Penny Marshall, 1996); secondly, the still recognizable changing process from Ovid's Pygmalion to the contemporary*El Señor de Pigmalión* (*Gentleman of Pigmalion*1921)by Jacinto Grau, or the Grail's mytheme from its original text by Chrétien de Troyes (c. 1180) to Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989); and, thirdly, the demythologizing transformation from the myth of Prometheus to the Matrix cinematic universe.

This fascinating scenario of literary and artistic myths and of their survival offers a global picture of what currently constitutes myth-criticism. Moreover, the interest in the collection is stirred by the ambiguous concept of crisis which permeatesthe articles, a selection of 30 texts reviewed by an international board of experts and the editors.

The volume, with the logical variety of definitions and approaches to myth, is divided into three parts which, in turn, consist of four sections each. These includearticles written in English, French and Spanish dealing mainly, but not only, with literary and cinematographic texts, preceded by a preface by Losada where he presents the main issues addressed by each article.

The first four theoretical studies discuss the key points:the crisis of mythsoutlined in Losada'sintroduction and in Robert A. Segal's paper, "The Challenge to Myth from Religion", as well asa crisis of concepts and terminology, as described in Del Prado's and Klik's chapters. Segal points out how the previous incompatibility between religious and scientific explanations was reconciled in the 20th and 21st centuries through three strategies. To start with, by re-characterizing the function of religion and myth, as Rudolf Bultmann does, and interpreting myth existentialism from a religious point of view; furthermore,as MirceaEliadesuggested, by elevating secular stories to religious myths, on the one hand, with examples such as the mythologization of George Washington as father of the USA; and on the other hand,by turning religious myths into secular ones, as in Albert Camus's interpretation of Sisiphus myth, turning pity to admiration in the hands of secular readers.

Articles three and four attempt to clarify the often confusing terminology applied to literary myths and the meaning of the word "crisis". In Del Prado's "Mitos y crisis de mitos: unproblema de conceptos y terminología" ("Myths and crisis of Myths: a problem of concepts and terminology"), the author presents a stimulating analysis of the terminological problems that, surprisingly, still surround the concepts of "myth", "archetype" and "prototype". Del Prado denies the current critical situation of myths outside the social and existential crises, adding that it will always depend on the meaning of the word "crisis". Similarly, in "The Crisis of the Notion of Literary Myth in French Literary Studies", Marcin Klikfocuses on the textual nature of literary myths, according to the author, a concept in crisis ever since its birth. Healso emphasizesthe importance of terminological clarity for constructive academic dialogue, which, after reading the article, seems somehow wishful thinking.

After the review of the theoretical state of the art in what refers myth-criticism, the second is the largest and, probably, most engaging section. It explores the different

crises that have affected ancient, medieval and modern myths in literary and artistic manifestations from a global perspective by taking into account anthropology, ethics, politics and meta-literature as the four dominant traits that characterize cultural myths. The essays dealing with anthropological and psychological issues offer several sources of anxiety and distress – both individual and collective –which have challenged the stability of human identity. Starting from the hybrid figure of Pan, the man-goat, as well as the narrative and visual representation as the origins of its myth, Leon Burnett's "Panic Attacks: Myth as Critical Intervention" focuses on myths as responses to the crisis of belief in literary tradition; from John Keats and the second half of the nineteenth century, including Elizabeth Barrett Browning or Ivan Turgenev, to twentieth century authors such as T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Pessoa andothers. Children's classics and contemporary films where the twofold derivation of Pan's name represents the modern condition ofa "terrified consciousness", add to the author's captivating insights on the different readings of this classical episode, demonstratingnot only the richness of the tale and its rewritings. The examples provided show a gradual process of disorientation; the cry as an auditory effect that gradually becomes mute, representing the overwhelming contemporary void.

Individual readings of myths are the main concern of other essays in this section. For instance, Marta Miquel-Baldellou's "The Myth of Apollo and Daphne as a Metaphor of Personal Crisis in Daphne Du Maurier's "The Apple Tree"", debates convincingly the intertextual links with the classical myth, highlightingDu Maurier'smarital problems, her ambivalent sexual identity and her menopause. Some essays focus on moral conscience and new ethical meanings for myths. Among these, Rebeca Gualberto evaluates McCarthy's post-apocalyptic *The Road* (2006) as an after-postmodernist return to humanist ethics which rejects binary oppositions and redeems a man-made mythology in her ""Where you've nothing else construct ceremonies out of the air": The Ethics of McCarthy's Post-Mythical Apocalypse in *The Road"*. Ben Pestell'sarticle,"Poetic Re-enchantment in an Age of Crisis: Mortal and Divine Worlds in the Poetry of Alice Oswald", debates on the possible decay but impossible disappearance of myths using two poems *Dart* and *Memorial* to demonstrate that myth can survives crises by harmonizing opposing principles such as those that separate humanity from nature or from the gods.

Other chapters highlight the sociological extension of mythsand their less common side regarding gender issues. Among them, a fascinating critique of competitive patriarchy is carried out by Sanghita Sen and Indrani Mukherjee which deconstructs water myths from India through the legend of Mexican Llorona in Deepa Mehta's film *Water* (2005). Another female symbol, Antigone, is the center of Giuliano Lozzi'spaper in a re-elaboration of the myth under a queer reading, through the theories of Margaret Susman, Judith Butler, María Zambrano and LuceIrigaray. The myth is contemplated as a representation of the crisis of male western thought.

The last section, "Myth and Meta-Literature", is devoted to the use of mythemes in different authors, and their use to expand classical meaning by retelling. From Claude Simon's*nouveau roman* (Ian de Toffoli) to the Portuguese poet Sophia de Mello Breyner that Adriana Martins-Frias discusses in her enthralling article. ManelFeijoó's "La

reinvención de las figurasmitológicasen la literatura de Julio Cortázar" is self-explanatory in his evaluation ofCortázar's lifelong fascination and appropriation of mythological figures from *Los reyes* (*The Kings* 1947) to *Las ménades* (*Maenads* 1964), which evidences his literary radical transgression.

The third part of the volume is structured in three sections that analyze the way our material world mythologizes people, characters and nations, creating new myths of immanence to protect itself. The first section, "Mythologizing People", opens with Ana González-Rivas Fernández'sexploration of Edgar Allan Poe as contemporary hero and antihero. MetkaZupancic's significant contribution, "Kristeva's *The Samurai*: "Camouflage of sacredness in a desacralized world"", explores Kristeva's novel *Les Samuraïs* (1990) and her ironic critique of mythical patterns or ideologies.

The chapters in the "Mythologizing Characters" section address fictional figures whose personality is ruled by mythical content rather than reality. Alejandra Spagnuolo's "*Skyfall*" deals with James Bond's regeneration in Sam Mendes's episode (2012) and its explicit use of national myths from the Victorian era as pillars of Englishness and salvation. Other mythologized literary references, such as Mme. Bovary, are studied in Patricia Martínez's essay, "Au-delà du Bovarysme: *Melancholia* de Lars Von Trier". The author exploresboredom and depression as literary pathologies in the Danish film, an apocalyptic *tableau-poème-cinématographique*that offers a utopian reading where the world can only be saved by fantasy.

The final section examines the improbable crisis experienced by those national myths which permeate the cultural material. A national symbol, Marcel Proust, is used by Anja Schwennsen in her "Myth Lost and Found in Proust's *À la recherché du temps perdu"* to demonstrate the power of myth in the twentieth century as a needed anthropological constant. The author uses three literary examples of mythical speech from Proust's*Recherche*to produce what she identifies as an irrational mythical thought that speaks to us emotionally. The volume finishes with an enthralling chapter, Naoko Hosokawa's "Language as Myth: Reinvented Belief in the Spirit of Language in Japan", where national awareness is emphasized in the myth of the spirit of Japanese language, *kotodama*, which serves ideological purposes as representing the true Japaneseness. This symbol of enduring Japanese cultural identity has re-invented itself through the centuries; particularly in the 8th century, the 17th century, the Second War World, and from the 1950s to the 1970s. The author explains that this periodical reinterpretation shares its defensive political reaction to foreign influences, and proves the flexibility of myths, capable of maintaining their constant ideological ends.

As a contribution to myth studies, the volume presented here is ansplendid contribution, in line with the research started by José Manuel Losadayears ago, with the publication of numerous titles such as *Nuevasformas del mito.* (*New forms of myths* 2015). Together with Antonella Lipscomb, their ambitious, rigorous and attentive work has produced a selection of papers that illustrates the main problems and the different approaches to myths. Obviously there would always be readers who object to the structure of the volume and, more specifically, to some inevitable thematic repetitions in different articles and sections. However, all in all, it should be considered

an extremely valuable twist in the road to the contemporary study of myths, for specialized scholars as for general readers. The balanced content and the wealth of information are a clear asset in a volume that anatomizes some of the hidden aspects of myths' modern collective and private catharses. Accounting for the multifaceted complexities of myths and of their crises constitutes the key strength of such an important contribution to myth-criticism. This is what this volume set out to do, and with great success; producingextremely sound academic criticism, even if it cannot solve all inquiries, leaving the reader to discover some of them.

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Henry Sussman. *Playful Intelligence. Digitazing Tradition*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. 416 pp. isbn: 978-1-47256-882-3

It is a great challenge to do justice to Prof.Sussman's*Playful Intelligence* in the limited space of this review-article. The book is an encyclopaedic, insightful, cross-disciplinary and complex loop that simultaneously frames and deframes modernity in "A sprawling, maddening, jet-lagged, and eminently stunning trip," writes Justin Read (State University of New York)on the back cover. Indeed, in his journeyfrom Kandinsky to Kafka, from Alfred Döblin to Walter Benjamin, or from Jorge Luis Borges toRoberto Bolaño, among other trips, Sussman's interventions encompass critical theory on artistic creativity, idiosyncratic insights from philosophy, cultural studies, as well as acybernetic discourse characteristic of Hofstadter's fusion of dynamic systems theory and Zen. Sussman's languages converge in the applicability of all knowledge tocognitive science and schizoanalysis. The volume's introduction, "Convergence-Zone: Art, Theory, Therapy", sets up the initial conditions of his intermedial genealogy of digital culture, envisioned as therapeutic cognitive practice beyond "configurations of irreducibly linguistic 'wiring'" (5), the physical and the mechanically 'smart' (intelligent self-replication), the analog and the digital.

The volume draws on a multitude of scholarly benchmarks such as Anthony Wilden*System and Structure* (1972; translator ofLacan's*The Language of the Self*1968), Douglas R. Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (1979), Jacques Derrida's deconstructions, particularly influential in the Yale School following his affiliation with the university in the late 1970s, and a "virtual landscape of Marxian-Freudian *assemblages,*" (17)borrowedfrom Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's*A Thousand Plateaus,* among others.Sussman returns to these (and other) pivotal points or attractor zones, drawingmeaning from amultiplicity of intertextual and interdisciplinary languages, conjured up in various parts of the volume, making them converge, eventually, in a sort of healing Zen kôan. Thus, the volume opens up a wide geography of convergence zones which, in turn, unveil imposed categories, power divisions, and constraints within academic disciplines and established art forms. Ultimately, the discussion seeks to heal the cultural wounds and knowledge divides that too narrowly categorized accounts have provoked.

Sussmanmakes his way alongthe margins of a "treasury of *idées recues*, identified for better or worse, as the enduring concepts (ideas, paradigms, *épistèmes*) configuring the Great Tradition" (14), and a crowd, a host of cultural phenomena that constitutea trans-historical allegorical "conceptual operating system" (16); a Wordsworth-like pathwhich, he goes on to show, forks in various space-time directions and at various levels of fractal interpretation, only to return to the *West-östlicher Divan*,critical attractor zones of singularity, isomorphism or resonance that articulate this complex multi-cultural, multi-layered, yet consistent, narrative.

Although Sussman acknowledges the impact of romantic sensibility in characterizing the conditions of immediacy and immersion that have eventually led to interactivity and the self-sustained "addiction to the virtual states of everyday life" (21), the author turns to the performative "platforms" of 20th-century modernism in order to conform a syntax of close and distant readings, exegesis and meta-commentary, analog and digital organizations that ultimately help envision human "playful intelligence" as a Faustian spirit equal to a therapeutic drive.

In chapter one, Sussman enters Wassily Kandinsky's visual space, a forbidden interstitial *khôra* zone which, rather than collapsing into analog substance and memory-stores, "opens up horizons of improvisation," (61), grammars of colors, shapes and textures (63), digital windows to the world that become the symptomatic matrix of a proto-cybernetic sensibility. Moving from the visual to the literary, chapter two situates Franz Kafka's reading of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamzov*in *The Trial* (*Der Process*) as a digital parable with key operating principles which generate "doublebinds, at the semantic level, out of double-entendre," turning "architectural scenery and internalized disputation into generators in a permutationalaesthetics," and heightening"legal persecution and incarceration by means of closed architecture and spurious argumentation." (89) To Sussman, "each of these telling and transformative moments in Kafka's literary inscription *marshals allegory in the service of digital organization and processing.* (100; emphasis in the original) He goes on to describe these elements as "linguistic ambiguity (polysemy), recursion in plot-development, strategic coincidences and concurrences in theme, atmosphere, and setting, and the open ended multiplicity of plausible inferences," (103)as he moves towards Kafka's animal parable "Der Bau" (The Burrow) in the following chapter. These two chapters engage alterity as an operating language, bringing to the fore the cybernetic dimensions of Kafka's stylistic innovations, "outside of all bounds," "in a state of open-ended expansion" (136).

In the following chapter, Sussman turns to Alfred Döblin's*Berlin Alexanderplatz,*and framesDöblin'scity in a dialogue with James Joyce's Dublin in *Ulysses,* both envisionedas "hubs of urban transaction" (140), "systems-nexus" and "atmospheric generators" (142) of "urban introjections" characteristic of many modernist locations. The chapter also revisits the arcades of Proust and Walter Benjamin's *Das Passagen-Werk,* ultimately tracing a nomadic topology of social and individual identities-in-the-making, at the banks of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. The lyric modulation and musical tempo present in these sitesaccompany Sussman's introjections almost as a chorus, an anticipatory instrumental tag to be pursued in the following

chapter, “Theory on the Fly: Critical Synthesis under Conditions of Material Pirating and Borrowed Time”. Here Sussman traces a feedback loop to improvise upon Benjamin’s *The Arcades Project,* including a number of consonant “Convolutes K-N” (170) that encompass the epigrammatic Wittgenstein-like tempo of a chapter where the dialogue with Baudelaire, Marx and Engels, Hegel, Nietzsche as well as Derrida’s “Tympan” “Double Session” and “Glas”,crystallizes in a supreme critical cybernetic fugue, which closes with the following coda:

> The critic keeps writing. Writing is the only craft or exercise through which the writer maintains their tact at setting the sails of difference and modulated articulation, even if they already have tenure, even if writing further therefore represents an unnecessary risk or danger to the stability they have achieved. The critic keeps on writing, even as they have sustained their quixotic quest of reading, in Benjaminian fashion, e*verything.* (202)

Granted indulgences for visiting particular sacred locations along the journey, Sussman’s next chapter breaks off “Playful Healing”, stopping at the “Transitions of D. W. Winnicott”. Once more, the chapter loops back to thedisfigurative traits of Kafka, Joyce, Pound,and later Beckett in a move where linear accretion collapses “past all points of absurdity,” and “by dint of its intrinsic ‘chunking,’ it begins to ‘loop strangely’ on itself: it ‘bubbles’ into its performative and metacritical dimensions.” (219). Sussman’s reading of “Winnicott’s manifestly playful psychotherapeutic alliance” (242) turns into a resonance to be replayed in various parts of the volume, but above all in “Afterword: Healing, Systematically”. In the meantime, Sussman revisits phenomenology, abandoning rhythm for a time, and returning to the morphing space of figures and their cognitive implications.

Almost as an echo of Virginia Woolf’s “The Mark on the Wall,” the section titled “The Figure in the Network” presents the ethical aspects of Douglas Hofstadter’s “affective correlative to intelligence”,in loving memory of his deceased wife Carol. The true meaning of empathy is “the interpenetration of souls”(257). Sussman’s”on the fly” account of Hofstadter’s *I Am a Strange Loop*as a network “simulating and predicating mental activity and interpersonal behaviour” (261) settles on the “techtonic-cultural plate/platform” (284), anticipating the virtual landscapes of contemporary online social networks almost as a confirmation or material proof of our emotional inscription in cyberspace. The constant movement of this metamorphic narrative is here held first in the space of melancholy, and almost immediately in the time of Morpheus jetlag, as it reaches its final autopoietic afterword loop. Sussman’s discussion returns to its starting point, to justify art and critical writing as an interventional therapeutic initiative to “embroider, adumbrate, elucidate, enlarge, and modify or correct a configuration or state of affairs that has persisted and persists.” (307).

All of these interventions “involve mutual understandings, whether with relations, mentors, friends, or poets and sculptors thousands of miles and years away” (307) and can ‘heal’ because they “open windows within the architectures of closed systems” (310). “The degree to which an intervention is prompted, commissioned, or remunerated by an other, its ability to bring about systematic reconfiguration, opening,

and release is foreclosed.” (307) It is in this sense that ‘healing’ is “a process of *re-mediation*”, “a *medium* rather than a conceptual model, technique, practice, or school” (310), where the “ultimate results of the quest for ‘wholeness’” is the “cessation of pain” (311). Thus, in the last pages of the volume, Sussman’s narrative turns again to psychoanalysis, as it morphs into schizoanalysis,in order to clarify the relationship between the experience and consciousness of pain, as well as the addiction to sites of unconscious scape provided by the therapeutic virtualityof aesthetics and critical writing.

Sussman’s describes writing as an impossible choreography between various levels of signifiers as they morph in transitional spaces where rhythm is soothing. Thus, he explains that “The aesthetic of composition is the dynamic zone or*khôra* where the non-linearity common to poems, Zen kôans, and inventive mathematics proffer limited healing and recourse to discourse rendered immobile by the erosion of its very grooves” (329); an intermedial non-place “waived or suspended by the *visual* resources intrinsic to poetic space.” (329)

Before closure, Sussman’s performs yet a final ‘number’; a coda that facilitates the convergence of the multiplicity of discourses around the parable of “one-finger Zen” (333). The “ability to dislodge stasis, melancholy, or sedateness into spirited motion is the secret logic networking if not sequentially harnessing the Zen kôans” (341).In the parable, the Zen master and his pupil engage in an indexical relation where knowledge is transferred from one to an other entering the domain of digital relationality. “Buddhist practice is the mindful demolition restoring the freedom of the flow”, leaving behind “analog naming, comparison, mapping, division, and contribution” (335). The digit signals a creative *playful intelligence* that feels more at ease in its acrobat suspension among various levels of mental organization while attempting to capture the eternal movement of Escher’s drawing handsholding an autopoietic*porte-crayon,* digitazing tradition.

Carol and Douglas Hofstadter in a mutual nose touching, forming a (metaphorical) “strange loop” in July of 1987 in the Wallowa Mountains in Eastern Oregon. Source: Grossman, 2007

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